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THE MOUNTAIN WREATH

Translated by J. W. Wiles

SERBIAN SONGS AND POEMS

Chords of the Yugoslav Harp

(2nd Impression)

FIRST MORNING SERVICE WITH
FATHER

THE DEATH OF SMAIL AGA

(2nd Edition)

FROM HOSPITAL WINDOWS, Etc.

THE MOUNTAIN WREATH
of

P. P. NYEGOSH

Prince-Bishop of Montenegro

1830—1851

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH

by

JAMES W. WILES

With an Introduction by

Vladeta Popović

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1267.

THIS TRANSLATION IS
DEDICATED
BY SPECIAL PERMISSION
TO
THEIR GRACIOUS MAJESTIES
KING ALEXANDER I AND QUEEN MARIE,
WHOSE JOY AND GLORY CONSIST IN THE UNITY AND THE VALOUR
OF THEIR PEOPLE.
A HUMBLE TRIBUTE
FROM
THE TRANSLATOR
WHO FORGETS NOT THAT HIS GRACIOUS MAJESTY
IS HIMSELF
A SON OF TSERNAGORA

O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernagora! never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON to *Montenegro*

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THAT a second edition of *The Mountain Wreath* has been so speedily called for is proof that interest is not wanting in the West in Yugoslavia, or her literature. During the few months which have elapsed since the publication of the first edition, this interest has been expressed with much cordiality both in Great Britain and America as well as in certain countries of the continent of Europe, where it was found easier to read English than the pithy Montenegrin of the Original. The volume has been widely welcomed,¹ as rendering more easily accessible a real national document. Numerous letters which have come to hand have brought to mind a certain Southern Slav saying:—

Neznano . . . nepitano;

Znano . . . voljeno.

Unknown . . . unsought for;

Comes knowledge . . . comes love.

JAMES W. WILES.

BELGRADE,
July 14, 1930.

¹ While expressing his thanks to that numerous body of Anglo-American Red Cross, Relief and Reconstruction workers, both in Serbia and on the Salonica Front during the years 1914-20, who have welcomed this volume, the Translator also desires to thank in this connection the gifted and sympathetic author of *Engleskinje u srpskom narodu*, Miss Yelena Lazarevitch, Professor and Member of the Committee of the Women's Association, Belgrade.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS OF THE FIRST EDITION

"The Poem is certainly, as Mr. Wiles claims, a great national document. His rendering is simple and lovely, and should increase English interest in Yugoslav literature."—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

"An excellent verse translation which catches, in no small measure, the poetic charm and the nationalist fervour of the original. . . . Rightly has it been an inspiration to the whole Yugoslav movement, and as such it is an historical document of great value. But it is also great drama, which in Mr. Wiles' hands is still great drama in an alien tongue."—*The Manchester Guardian*.

"This is a work of great value, since it gives to the whole English-speaking world in an admirable translation one of Serbia's most famous and representative poems. One may perhaps be permitted to hope that it will arouse, wherever the English language is spoken, that same deep understanding and true sympathy which have inspired Mr. Wiles in the accomplishment of his work."—His Excellency Dr. J. DYNELEY PRINCE, Minister Plenipotentiary of the U.S.A. in Yugoslavia, in *Srpski Književni Glasnik, Serbian Literary Review*, for April, 1930.

"Well rendered into spirited and impressive blank verse from the original Serbian, Mr. Wiles' scholarly translation of the epic poem by Peter Petrovitch Nyegosh. . . . The writer of the introduction, Dr. Vladeta Popovitch, gives an interesting account of the Poet's life. The translator is well qualified to interpret Nyegosh's masterpiece in a spirit that reflects its famous singer's well-felt and eloquently expressed love of freedom."—*The Scotsman*.

"Eminently readable."—*Aberdeen Press and Journal*.

"Worth a cartload of modern novels."—*G. K. Chesterton's Weekly*.



Владѣе П. П. Негашъ

VLADIKA P. P. NYEGOSH

THE MOUNTAIN WREATH

By

THE BISHOP OF MONTENEGRO
PETAR PETROVITCH NYEGOSH

INTRODUCTION

WHAT Shakespeare is to England,¹ Njegoš is to Serbia: her greatest and most nationally representative poet. Njegoš's finest work, *The Mountain Wreath* (*Gorski Vijenac*), has had a success unparalleled by any other product of Serbo-Croatian literature, both at home and abroad. English is the tenth language into which it has been translated, the others being Russian, Bulgarian, Czech, Slovene, Italian, German, Hungarian, Swedish, and French. In Serbo-Croatian lands it has had a better fate than classics usually have: it is not admired from a respectable distance, but much and widely read and loved. It has been frequently reprinted, the best critical edition being that of Professor Milan Rešetar. The subject of Njegoš and his work has attracted many distinguished Yugoslav writers, among them three whose names are already known in England: Professor Pavle Popović deals with the literary aspect of *The Mountain Wreath*, Professor Brana Petronijević with its philosophy, and Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović with the religion of Njegoš.² More than any other work *The Mountain Wreath* reveals the essence and substance of a race that has had to go through many tribulations and to fight against many difficulties.

The author of *The Mountain Wreath* was born in

¹ The writer of this Introduction is the author of *Shakespeare in Serbia*, the third volume in the "Shakespeare Survey" series, made under the general direction of Sir I. Gollancz, Litt.D., F.B.A., and published for the Shakespeare Association by the Oxford University Press, London, 1928.

² See Bibliography, p. 27.

1811 or 1813 in Njeguši in Montenegro. The name he received at baptism was Rade. After the death of his uncle, Petar I, Bishop of Montenegro, who had designated him as his successor, Rade was made monk in 1831, changed his name to Petar, and in 1833 went to Russia to be made bishop. He was the last of a succession of bishops who, since the end of the XVIIth Century, had gradually gathered into their hands the full power of a secular ruler over the Montenegrin clans. He died of consumption in 1851. His full name and title was Petar II Petrović Njegoš, Bishop of Montenegro, but he is generally known as Njegoš.

Njegoš was a cultured man who had read much, meditated much, and experienced much. He was for quite a long time the only educated man in his country. Most of the priests were illiterate. They carried arms like other men and fought with the Turks. A typical example of a *pop* or priest is that given in a humorous scene in *The Mountain Wreath*. Pop Mićo cannot read a letter which he has himself written. He is laughed at by Bishop Danilo and the chieftains, but he is not dismayed, and coolly remarks that if he had had better teaching he would read better. For the church service he needs no books; he learnt by ear as a boy all he needs, and he delivers it from memory when occasion demands. Cases like that of Pop Mićo were quite usual not only in the XVIIIth Century, but also in the time of Njegoš. Njegoš never went to school abroad, nor to a regular school at home, for there was none in the whole of the country. His education

was begun in the monastery at Cetinje, and for a time continued at a monastery in Bocche di Cattaro.

The first man with university education with whom Njegoš came into contact was Simo Milutinović, the most romantic of Serbian poets. He came to Cetinje in 1827 to be secretary to Bishop Petar I, and remained there three or four years. His duty was also that of teacher to the young Njegoš. Milutinović had studied for some time in Germany, where he made connections with Herder, Grimm, Uhland, Goethe. He was by nature a romantic, a gifted poet, and a heroic man, but extravagant in style, so that he never came near to perfection in his literary work. He had attached himself to the pseudo-classical movement in poetry, and had acquired some of its bad qualities. His work overflows with the names of classical gods and goddesses. Nevertheless, his influence on Njegoš was for good. He showed him the greatness of Serbian folk-poetry, which had attracted much attention even from such men as Goethe, and he imparted to him a love of the great poetry of Europe, ancient and modern, and gave him a taste for philosophy.

While at Cetinje, Milutinović wrote two dramas. One of them was dedicated to Sir John Bowring, the translator of Serbian folk-poetry into English. The dedication is also interesting because it contains one of the earliest references in Serbian literature to Shakespeare. This drama dealt with a subject from Montenegrin history. Njegoš later found in this a precedent which he followed in his *Mountain Wreath*. Milutinović's second drama treated of Miloš Obilić, the greatest

hero of Serbian folk-poetry. This play was written in eight days among the mountains, in a shepherd's hut, during which time Milutinović abstained almost entirely from food, and attained to mystic visions. The character of Miloš Obilić left a powerful impression on Njegoš, and his name is frequently mentioned in *The Mountain Wreath*. It may be of interest to mention that the first man to write a drama about Obilić was an Englishman, Thomas Goffe, Master of Arts and Student of Christ Church in Oxford. The play was acted by the students of Christ Church on St. Matthew's Day, 1618, under the title of *The Tragedy of Amurath, Third Tyrant of the Turks*. It was first published in 1632, under the title of *The Courageous Turk, or Amurath the First*. Although the play does not bear his name, Obilić is really its hero. In the conflict between the Turks and the Serbs on Kossovo Field in 1389 Goffe saw a situation which was for him symbolical of the conflict between Mohammedanism and Christianity.

Milutinović was not a man who could give Njegoš systematic education, but he awakened in him the latent qualities of a poet, a thinker, and a hero. We do not know what books the master gave his pupil to study, but we know that they spent much time in wandering through the mountains, in bitter cold, in blazing sunshine, or through the driving rain. Evidently Milutinović wished to make of Njegoš a man who could triumph over any physical difficulty. This exercise seems to have been sometimes carried to excess. It is related how master and pupil competed as to who could gaze longest at the blazing sun without

flinching. However, one thing is certain: in those walks Njegoš learnt to commune with Nature, and to listen in his own soul to what the Black Mountains and the starry heavens whispered to him.

On the death of Bishop Petar I in 1830 Milutinović left Cetinje. Njegoš was recognized by the chiefs of the people as the successor of his uncle. He was made monk and then archimandrite, and changed his name, according to the custom of the Eastern Church. Rade became Petar, in memory of his uncle. His desire was to be made bishop by the Russian Church, but circumstances were such that he had to postpone his journey to Russia for two or three years. Meanwhile he came into a dangerous conflict with the Turks. The Montenegrins made two unsuccessful attacks on a town within the Turkish territory. The Turks then sent an army against Montenegro. The Montenegrins were victorious, but the Turks prepared a more serious attack, which might have been disastrous for the Montenegrins if Russian intervention in Constantinople had not prevented it. The Russians had been the protectors of Montenegro for a number of years, and with financial help sent by them Njegoš began to work for the unification of the clans into a State. He instituted the first law-court at Cetinje, the chief function of which was to silence the feuds that existed between the clans. Some slight taxation was also imposed on the people. Then Njegoš went to Russia, where he was made bishop in the presence of the Emperor. He returned to his country as Petar II Petrović Njegoš, Bishop of Montenegro. The Bishop,

who was also the chief secular authority in the country, was then only twenty-two years of age, or, if we take 1813 to have been the date of his birth, perhaps only twenty.

The visit to Russia had a great influence on him. He saw the culture of Vienna and Petrograd, brought back many books, and published his first book of poems. He founded the first elementary school and the first printing-press, and ten years later a second elementary school. Roads began to be constructed in the country. Njegoš's chief end was to preserve the independence of Montenegro, to enlarge and fix its frontiers. The dream of his life was to see all Serbian lands free from Turkish or Austrian oppression. The transformation of his country from a clan State into a united, civilized State was very slow and laborious. The Turks remained a grave danger to the end of his life.

Njegoš travelled twice to Russia and three times to Vienna. In 1850 he began to spit blood, and went to Italy to seek a cure. He returned to Italy later, to spend the winter in Naples. But there was no remedy for his illness, and he died at Cetinje in 1851, at the age of forty or thirty-eight.

His favourite pastimes were hunting, billiards, and cards. He was a good rider and an excellent shot. But his chief occupation besides government was poetry: reading, meditating, and writing. His favourite poets were Lamartine, Byron, Dante, and Petrarch. He knew Russian and French well. English he did not know, although an English grammar in Italian and an English-German dictionary were found among his

books. He had Byron's works in a Leipzig edition, and those of Shakespeare in a French translation; *Ossian* in German, Scott's *Life of Napoleon* in Russian, and *Ivanhoe* in a Leipzig edition, as well as Hume's *History of England* in French, were also among his books. It is known that he possessed Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Russian, full of his own marks and notes, but this has disappeared from his library. Although Njegoš's poem on the Fall of Man, *The Light of the Microcosm*, is an original creation, there are points of contact between it and *Paradise Lost*, and the loss of his Russian copy of Milton is regrettable. It might have revealed to us the exact way in which Milton was his inspiration. It has been reported that, besides other poets, he had read all the Greek classics, probably in translation. Njegoš was a perfectly balanced nature, and it is not surprising to find from his works that his spirit was as much romantic as classical. His emotional and intellectual life had equal freedom of development.

A foreign visitor, Dr. Biasoletto, describes Njegoš as "tall, of good stature, of magnificent appearance, kind and courteous, cultured". His appearance also made a very favourable impression on an English traveller, G. Wilkinson, who recorded it in his book on Dalmatia and Montenegro.

The body of Njegoš reposes on the topmost peak of Lovćen, the highest mountain in the region, more than 5,500 feet above sea-level. There he had built a little church and a tomb for himself. From that place can be seen the whole of Montenegro and parts of

those other Serbian lands whose freedom was the dream of Njegoš.

A hundred times I've gazed at floating clouds,
Sailing as phantom ships high off the sea,
And casting anchor on this mountain range!
Now here, now there I've watched them break away,
With darts of lightning and with rumblings dread,
And sudden roar of all the sky's artillery!
A hundred times have I watched from these heights,
And quietly basked beneath the genial sun,
While lightnings flash'd and thunders peal'd below:
I saw and heard how they did rend the skies;
Downpours from heaven of most hostile hail
Robbed Mother Earth of her fertility.

These words of Bishop Danilo in *The Mountain Wreath* must represent an actual experience of Njegoš, but they are charged with deeper, symbolic meaning: at the time of Bishop Danilo, Montenegro was the only Serbian land on which the sun of freedom shone; all the others were overhung by heavy clouds of servitude.

The part of Montenegro comprising Lovćen rises like a tremendous fortress from the Gulf of Cattaro at the southern extremity of the Dalmatian coast. The contrast between the enchanting, smiling beauty of the Adriatic waters and the frowning barrenness of Montenegro is awe-inspiring. On the one side the blue waters of the loveliest gulf in Europe, the green of fertile land, and the gleam of small white towns bordering the coast; on the other, a sea of dark and jagged mountains, their barren greyness relieved only by tiny cultivated patches of earth. Here and there a lonely church or a small stone house: the gloom and desolation of a

rocky desert, with a magnificence not of our planet but of the dead moon. Here the Montenegrin clans, with their cattle, eked out a sparse existence, perpetually fighting among themselves and with the Turks all through the XVIth, XVIIth, and XVIIIth Centuries. When Njegoš became chief of the country the rising sun of freedom shone brighter than it ever had done during the last two or three centuries, but the horizon was still dark with the menace of the Mohammedan power. In such surroundings and such circumstances a man with a poetic soul and a philosophic mind could not but plunge into the mystery of existence. Why was earth created? Why was man set upon it? Why is the life of man a constant misery and happiness only a dream? Njegoš was a pessimist, but he found the way that led out of the dungeon of life to bliss. All these experiences found powerful expression in his first great poem, *The Light of the Microcosm*.

The Light of the Microcosm was published in 1845, a year or two before *The Mountain Wreath*. From a purely literary point of view it is not equal to *The Mountain Wreath*, but it cannot be disputed that it is so far the most profound poem in the Serbo-Croatian language. It consists of a dedication to Simo Milutinović and six cantos—2,210 lines in all. The first reading is not an easy one, but like *Paradise Lost* and every other great poem, each repeated reading reveals new depths of thought and powers of imagination.

Full many a time with flaming soul have I besought
The blue vault of the sacred heavens, sown with starry seed,
To reveal to me the holy secret.

But neither nature nor the wise men of earth revealed to Njegoš the secret of the fate of man. Finally, he is led by the divine spark in his own soul into the world of eternity. There his guardian angel bids him drink from a source of heavenly waters, which discover to him the cause of the fall of man. He sees the beginnings of time, the abode of the Almighty, and His faithful servants, archangels and angels, who live in perpetual bliss. He sees the rebellion of Satan and his overthrow. One of the adherents of Satan repents in time, for which reason God softens the punishment which he had merited. The penitent was a mighty spirit called Adam. He and his followers were thrown into the prison of the flesh on the planet-earth. But God sent His Son to bring the light of eternal life into the darkness of earth. Since then man may of his free choice partake of the life of bliss which he lost through Adam's treason to God.

Milton's *Paradise Lost* was no doubt a source of inspiration to Njegoš, but not an object of imitation. The theme is the same—the fall of Adam—but the treatment is quite different. *The Light of the Microcosm* is an original creation. Every line of it is the result of personal experience. Life was like a terrible dream to Njegoš:

Man has been thrown into a heavy sleep,
And terrible visions come to him,
And he can scarce discern
Whether he is of them or apart.

Njegoš was a bishop, but he was not conventional in matters of religious belief. He spoke the truth which

he found in his own soul, not what was imposed on him by the dogmas of the Church. When he speaks of the immortality of the soul he is not repeating an idea which he has taken on faith without being fully conscious of its truth. His ideas on immortality spring from his own consciousness: he was not accepting a dogma that the soul is immortal; he *knew* that it is immortal.

The appearance of *The Light of the Microcosm* marked the beginning of a new phase in the work of Njegoš as a poet. It was followed by his masterpiece, *The Mountain Wreath*, in 1847, by *Stephen the Pretender*, finished the same year but published in 1850, and by two poems about Montenegrin warriors. About ten years before *The Light of the Microcosm* Njegoš had published two collections of poems: one was inspired by his visit to St. Petersburg, the other by Montenegrin fights with the Turks. A third volume, also about the struggle with the Turks, was finished about that time, but was published after the poet's death. All these poems are in the blank verse of Serbian folk-poetry, mostly in the trochaic pentameter. Two main subjects run through all of them: the fight for freedom and man's relation to God. *Stephen the Pretender* resembles *The Mountain Wreath* in form, each of them being a series of scenes called by Njegoš "historical happening", with the difference that the former is divided into five acts while the latter is not divided into acts at all. *Stephen the Pretender* is inferior not only to *The Mountain Wreath*, but also to *The Light of the Microcosm*; nevertheless it is interesting to

read. The central figure is an adventurer who came to Montenegro in the second half of the XVIIIth Century, and succeeded in convincing the people that he was the banished Emperor of Russia, Peter III. Njegoš clung too closely to the facts of history, with the result that the freedom of his poetic creation was hampered.

The words "the mountain wreath" signify: the glory of the mountains—the glory of Montenegro as exemplified by scenes from her struggles with the Turks for the preservation of freedom and Christianity. The Turkish power had swept over the Balkans like a tidal wave. Montenegro was the last to be submerged of the Serbian lands, in the beginning of the XVIth Century. By the end of the XVIIth it began to re-emerge into freedom—the first of Serbian lands to do so. But what the Turks could not do by military power, thanks to the inaccessibility of the Montenegrin land, their religion began to do. The spread of Mohammedanism among the Montenegrin tribes became a serious danger. Christianity and nationality with more or less primitive people were the same thing. If Christianity went, national customs went with it. Language would remain, but the people would be cut away from the bulk of the Serbian nation, and would feel like men in a fog. This is what may be seen to-day in Bosnia: the Mohammedans speak Serbian and consider themselves as Serbs, but the stream of their energy has been blocked, and, not mingling with the current of Christian Serbia, it is flowing nowhere and is stagnating. The racial instinct of the Montenegrins

was in mortal opposition to Mohammedanism. According to folk-tradition, Bishop Danilo, at the end of the XVIIth or beginning of the XVIIIth Century, instigated the eradication of Mohammedanism from Montenegro. Historians are not of one opinion as to the date of the consequent massacre; some of them think that it never really took place; but it is the subject Njegoš chose as the main theme of his best poem.

The Mountain Wreath is a series of scenes in the form of dialogues and monologues. The poem opens with a monologue by Bishop Danilo. He sees, as in a vision, the spread of Turkish power in Europe, and sees himself impotent to oppose it. Mohammedanism is spreading in the country: the Christians, the people as well as their chiefs, are ready to start a decisive fight with their faithless countrymen, but the Bishop is torn by an inner conflict. He sees that the struggle is inevitable, but he dreads the issue. If the opponents are equally matched, brothers of two different creeds will exterminate each other, and the only Serbs who have kept the spirit of the race free will vanish from the earth. For this reason the Bishop hesitates, in spite of his desire, to take action. Like Hamlet, he always finds some reason for postponing the action until the end of the poem, when he is hurled into it. Bishop Danilo, as created by Njegoš, is quite different from the bishop of the folk-tradition. In *The Mountain Wreath* Bishop Danilo has partaken much of the nature of his creator: a man of intellect, not only of will, a man who thinks long before plunging into the abyss of uncertainty.

Between the first gathering of the chiefs to deliberate as to venturing upon the ordeal of the sword concerning Islam and the execution of their decision a number of scenes illustrating the life and culture of the Montenegrins are introduced, loosely connected with the main theme and interwoven with "kolos" sung by the people, recalling the choruses of Greek tragedy; their themes range from the Kossovo disaster of 1389 to the extermination of the Mohammedans in Montenegro. The Kossovo disaster is regarded as a punishment from God, in His anger against the Serbian chiefs, who were striving against each other for supremacy instead of uniting against the enemy.

The state of culture as shown in these episodic scenes is primitive, but permeated with the love of freedom and justice. Vojvoda Draško relates his impressions of Venice.¹ Most of the people there, according to him, were ugly; riches had turned their heads. The poor were so devoid of spirit that they did not shrink from carrying fat, rich women through the streets in chairs! The houses were beautiful, but overcrowded, and the air polluted. The people were devoid of heroism; the law-courts were unjust; every man lived in constant fear of spies and false accusations; the prisons were like Hell:

One would not tie a dog there,
Much less a wretched human being.

Draško rebuked the prison-keepers, but his Dalmatian friend told him:

¹ *Vide* p. 145.

Speak not such words here;
 Just words may not be spoken here;
 Lucky art thou that none has understood thee!

The theatre¹ seemed a ludicrous institution to Vojvoda Draško. No entertainment pleased him there,² for he could not see a guslé anywhere. Now, to a foreigner the guslé is a most primitive one-stringed instrument with a very monotonous, moaning sound; but to a Serb it was sacred, for it was used as an accompaniment to the chanting of heroic folk-poetry. The best "guslars" (i.e. guslé-players) were blind. Their songs were full of grief for the loss of Serbian freedom, but also full of hope, relating the deeds of great heroes. Some of those songs when heard even to-day by Serbs of western education and culture bring tears to the eyes. It is only in such moments that one realizes the meaning and power of the guslé: the guslar sings like one in a trance; the sound of the guslé, with something of hypnotic power, puts the hearer too into a sort of trance; and the words of the song evoke in him the feeling that he too can die willingly for the freedom of his country. And tears? They are for those innumerable heroes who for centuries have given their lives, and for those innumerable ones who will in the future give their lives, for the freedom of their country.

But the atmosphere of *The Mountain Wreath* is not charged only with thoughts of blood. There is much serenity in it,³ and there is humour in such scenes as that already referred to with Pop Mićo,⁴ or that in

¹ *Vide* p. 151.

³ *Vide*, e.g., pp. 112, 190-7, 202-4, etc.

² *Vide* p. 154.

⁴ *Vide* pp. 181-2.

which an old woman tells of her own exploits as a witch, and is made to confess that she is only a poor wretch whom the Turks had forced to spread evil among the Montenegrin clans by her lies.

There are omens and earthquakes and a blood-red moon, portent of the approach of the terrible event: the extermination of the Mohammedan Montenegrins. There are dreams pointing to future events. All this recalls the atmosphere of *King Lear* or *Julius Caesar*, but it is quite original. Folk-lore is alive in any country before it becomes perfectly civilized. The most interesting incident of this kind is the dream of some forty Montenegrins on the eve of the attack of the Mohammedans. They all saw the same person in their dreams: the great hero of Kossovo, Miloš Obilić, had passed on a milk-white steed down the valley of Cetinje. The meaning is very simple: the Christians are to be victorious over the Moslems. Obilić has become the symbol of a desire dating from the end of the XIVth Century: to kill the Turks. That desire was deeply rooted in the subconscious mind of the people, and appears in the figure of the hero who killed the Turkish Emperor.

Deep thoughts about the nature of life are not wanting in *The Mountain Wreath*. The speeches of the blind abbot Stephen are considered by a distinguished Serbian philosopher, Dr. Petronijević, to anticipate the theories of Darwin. *The Mountain Wreath* abounds also in passages of exquisite lyrical beauty, such as that where Vuk Mandušić relates,¹ while half-asleep,

¹ *Vide* pp. 139-40.

how he was conquered by the charms of a maiden, and the mountains and the sea cast a reflection of their beauty over the poem.

The translator of *The Mountain Wreath* into English, Mr. J. W. Wiles, came to Serbia in 1913. First as Reader in English in the University of Belgrade, then as head of the British and Foreign Bible Society for South-Eastern Europe, he has linked a large part of his life with the fate of Serbia. He has mastered the language and entered with true insight and understanding into the soul of the people. His translation of Njegoš—which was preceded by that of Mazuranić's *Death of Smail-Aga*, Lazarević's *First Morning Service with Father*, and a collection of Serbian folk-songs—is the result of long and patient work. Not least among its merits is its entire faithfulness to the meaning and spirit of the finest production of the greatest Serbian poet.

VLADETA POPOVIĆ

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"A TALE TO BE CHANTED AND TOLD"¹

THE South Slavs (*Jugo-Slavs* or *Yugoslavs*), as of course Lord Macaulay's "schoolboy" knows, belong to the Indo-European family which mainly peoples Europe, Persia, and India to-day. The original Slav stock penetrated far into the Balkan Peninsula in the VIth and VIIth Centuries—a race of herdsmen and tillers of the soil; as Gibbon says, "chaste, patient, and hospitable". "Dangerous as fighting men", remarks the great historian, "by reason of their speed, agility, and hardiness, they were impatient of restraint and formed semi-independent tribes". This impatience of discipline may at times have led them into some misfortune. But the love of freedom of which it was the untutored and often impetuous manifestation has piloted the race to great and noble achievements.

Early in the IXth Century the Bulgarians, who had arrived in the Balkans in the VIIth Century, also began to become formidable. The Bulgarians were of entirely different stock, being a Turanian tribe, who became, it is true, fused with the Southern Slavs to the extent of losing their language, but never lost their identity. For over a century it seemed as if Bulgarians might subjugate Serbs.

The Serbs were at this time loosely organized into *zadrugas* or clans, several of which formed a *zhupa*

¹ See *Srpske Pesme*, or "National Songs of Serbia", by Owen Meredith, first Earl of Lytton, London, 1861. Reprinted with a Preface by G. H. Powell, London, 1917. "There remaineth to Serbia a story, A tale to be chanted and told!"

or district, ruled over by a lord called a *zhupan*, whose place and power seem to have corresponded very much to those of a Count amongst the Franks or Anglo-Saxons. The Dzupans or *zhupans* met in an assembly called a *skupshtina*, and it was their custom to elect one of their number as Grand Dzupan. But he had great difficulty in enforcing over the Dzupans themselves the control which he as Grand Dzupan was supposed to exercise. Not only were the Dzupans originally quite independent of each other; they also manifested a tendency to alienate their own people by oppression, and thus to put the race more or less at the mercy of determined enemies. Thus it came about that during the five hundred years preceding the Battle of Kossovo (1389)¹ the history of the

1 Knowest thou the Plain of Kossovo?

There did Lazo lose the Empire.

BRANKO RADIČEVIĆ.

So sings a modern Serbian poet of the great catastrophe of 1389. Thus have all the Southern Slav people always sung of it: the Serbian soldiers who survived the *via dolorosa* through the Albanian wilds without food in winter and reached ultimately the Salonica Front in 1915-16; the peasants of Lovćen and the Triglav; of the Zagorje and Dalmatia; on the Dalmatian isles or the wide plains of Panonia, by the river Morava or the Vardar. Thus it is engraved on the hearts of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—of all the Yugoslav nation. No victory has ever been celebrated as this defeat! Other and greater States, of course, have fallen, but the effect was different. Was any other disaster ever taken to heart so spiritually and so poignantly! Professor Tihomir R. Georgević, who holds the Ethnographic Chair at Belgrade University, writes: "There is no other epic which even distantly resembles that of Kossovo. Neither is there any other

Southern Slavs presented two main aspects: (1) a struggle for *internal* unity, the Grand Dsupans attempting some measure of centralization while the Dsupans resisted these attempts; and (2) the struggle for *external* security and national independence, threatened

instance of peoples who were not themselves involved in a national downfall nevertheless adopting that downfall as their own and celebrating it". A brilliant period of history, full of promise and of inspiration, was overwhelmed in night—as it seemed hopeless night, and yet hope did not die. The national unification reaching its culmination between the years 1331–55 had already aroused passionately cherished ideals, so that the surviving Yugoslavs saw in Kossovo not just a military disaster, not even only a racial downfall: they saw in it also the destruction of a great impetus towards a really noble and effective commonwealth. Many peoples suffered greatly during the years 1914–18. But the period was short. Kossovo represents the beginning of a prolonged school of racial suffering—and the prolongation of that suffering is the great point. The Serbian National Anthem, as it appeared in *The Times* from the pen of Elizabeth Christić during the opening days of the Great War, betrayed one echo of this suffering:

“Through five hundred years of durance
We have knelt before Thy face.”

“Where is Prizren, the glorious city? Where are the imperial palaces? Where is Dušan’s golden age which wonders wrought?” “Kossovo has swallowed all,” replies the poet (*vide* Appendix).

George Petrovitch Karageorge, “the father of Serbia”, in the year 1804 brilliantly headed a rising which ultimately brought about the emancipation of Serbia from the Turkish yoke. *Kara* is the Turkish for *black*, and it is said that he gained the title of Karageorge by reason of his taciturn and sometimes violent temper. An untutored peasant, he became the distinguished founder of a dynasty by sheer military genius and natural force of character. His patriotic activities extended over a period of some thirty years. In his early manhood he had gained some military experience as a volunteer under Austrian direction, but

at every moment of weakness either from Bulgaria or Byzantium—or even, later, from Hungary.

In the course of this struggle various great and attractive characters came into the foreground; characters known to every village child; characters whose

he had also acted upon his own initiative as a *haidouk*. Serbian children still listen wide-eyed to tales of the prowess of the *haidouks* (or *haiduks*), whose chivalry and daring commanded the respect even of their enemies. As champions of the poor and the wronged they were held in affection by their own people; while they were the terror of the Turkish oppressor. Their “knightliness” was proverbial, and was extended even to the poor Turk. They stood for a rough-and-ready righteousness, and were often much more moral as outlaws than was the “law” itself! Like some other great characters of whom history tells, Karageorge, when called by the dire necessities of his countrymen to greater undertakings, on various grounds refused: he did not know how to govern, he said. His countrymen said they would help him. He then objected that he was in character too much given to violence and impetuosity of temper. To this the people replied that the times were rough, and they needed a man of decision and severity. By a true instinct they insisted upon his becoming their leader, and his achievements justified the choice. Under Karageorge a force of 9,000 Serbs severely defeated 30,000 of the best troops of the Porte. This victory of Mishar is kept in constant remembrance in the Yugoslav capital by a thoroughfare which bears that name. No one could view the fine figure of Karageorge without recognizing his spiritual as well as his physical power, and there are proofs to hand that he inspired immense confidence and affection. Karageorge was a contemporary of Nelson, and it is no exaggeration to say that even Nelson himself is not dearer to the hearts of Englishmen than is Karageorge to the Serbian heart. There is more than one version of the fate of “the father of Serbia”. Beyond all doubt, however, the old chief was murdered; and the rivalry between the families of Milosh Obrenovitch and Karageorge became a lamentable feud which hampered a hard-pressed people throughout the XIXth Century.

names are constantly heard upon the lips of the Southern Slav people either in song or story.

In 1169, about the time that Henry II and Thomas à Becket were quarrelling in England, Stephen Nemanya established himself as ruler and founded a dynasty which was to endure until 1371—till the very eve of Sultan Murat's victory on Kossovo Field. The deep religious sense of the members of the Nemanya dynasty endeared them to their people, and helped to unite the State. Wandering year after year through Yugoslavia, one observes that the spiritual influence of the Nemanyas is still alive amongst the humblest and lowliest of the people; for the Southern Slavs live very vividly in their past—probably no people in the world more so! At the battle with the Turks by Koumanovo in 1912 did not the third son of King Stephen Nemanya appear, robed in white and seated in a glistening chariot drawn by white horses, that he might lead the Serbian peasant soldiers on to victory!

Who, then, was this third son of Stephen Nemanya? No other than Rastko or Sveti Sava—St. Sava—whose name is honoured every month of January not only with royal patronage in the large Assembly Hall of Belgrade University, but also in every school throughout the country. *Sveti Sava, shkolska slava!*—*St. Sava, School Festival!*—is a household word. It was St. Sava who, in 1219, grounded the autonomy of the Serbian Church, became himself the first Serbian archbishop, and encouraged schools and learning, living himself a life of unflagging industry and charming simplicity; for as Ivan Mažuranić sings in *Smrt*

Smail-Aga Tchengitcha of another spiritual servant of his people :

When healing wounds among his flock
 He brings to mind his own heart's pains ;
 Good shepherd he ! what he to others preaches
 He maketh sure his own example teaches.

The father of St. Sava, King Stephen Nemanya, as simple "Brother Simeon", spent his last days in rebuilding the old Greek monastery of Hilendar at Mount Athos, which was destined to be a remarkable centre of Serbian religious life.

The Serbian monarchs of the XIIIth and XIVth Centuries were no rude clansmen or glorified Robin Hoods ; rather were they schooled and accomplished sovereigns, trained at the Imperial Court of Constantinople or at Venice—in the days when Venice was indeed a Queen, preparing to "impose her will on towns and cities". We shall read in our Poem something about visits to Venice !

Stephen Nemanya will ever be an attractive figure ; but the most notable of all the Serbian sovereigns was Dushan Silni, or Dushan the Mighty. The reign of the celebrated Dushan began in the year 1331, when Edward III was occupying the throne of England, and it is the most glorious in Serbian history. Dushan was a legislator, as witness his famous *Code* ; but he was not less a military genius. Byzantine chroniclers liken the progress of his campaign to a raging torrent or some devastating fire. His soldiers would follow him anywhere ; his enemies fled before him. Dushan the Mighty did not, however, succeed in bringing to

an end the dividing of the country into provinces under powerful lords, who became independent as soon as any weakness showed itself from the side of the monarchy.

As long as Dushan was alive all went well with Serbia. He conquered several more Greek provinces, and soon all that was left to Constantinople of the Balkans was Thrace and Salonica. It even became a question whether the Turks or the Serbians would get to Constantinople first! The Turks, however, had crossed the Dardanelles and established themselves at Gallipoli the year before Dushan died suddenly, while on a campaign, in the village of Diavoli near Adrianople, at the age of forty-eight, on December 18, 1355. Although Serbia was not to succumb entirely to the Turk until a hundred years later, the process of disintegration began on the morrow of Dushan's death. In the year 1371 King Vukashin led a fresh host to stem the invasion, but on the banks of the Maritza he lost both the battle and his life, and all Serbian lands south of Skoplye (Turkish: Uskub) were occupied by the Turks. Now the very circumstance that had contributed to the rise of Serbia, namely the weakness of Constantinople, helped to bring about her fall. She had to bear an undue share of the great struggle which followed between the Crescent and the Cross.

After the death of Vukashin the lords and clergy of the southern Serbian kingdom chose as their king one of Dushan's lords, Lazar Greblyanovitch, whose wife, Militza, was a Nemanya. Prince Marko, the eldest son of Vukashin, had proclaimed himself king, but the

Vlastela and the clergy had repudiated his claims. Somewhat more than passing mention should be made of Marko Kraljevitch,¹ "the King's son", since his spirit broods over the entirety of our Poem. Gathering about himself a band of free lances, he spent his life in martial enterprise and constant adventure; Marko may be said, indeed, to be the Hereward the Wake of the Southern Slav schoolboy, while popular custom has a care that his memory shall be kept ever green. His valorous deeds, magnified and transformed by oral transmission among the people, have earned him the name of the Cid of Serbia.

Legend tells how Marko's mother, tired of washing blood-stained shirts, prayed him to leave off fighting. He therefore took to ploughing—not the fields, but the roads along which the Turks brought their trading caravans. The Turkish merchants attacked "the King's Son", but he killed them with his plough, taking their gold and bringing it to his mother. "There, Mother dear! see what to-day I've ploughed thee!" Therein is a parable: a picturesque way of imparting the truth that the followers of peaceful avocations had been transformed by the Turkish menace into warriors. Most legends connect Marko with the Castle of Prilep in Western Macedonia. Prilep was the place of his birth, and how often is one assured that he has never died, but simply sleeps under the blue mountains that dominate the little town of Prilep. You will be told that his drastic sword is embedded somewhere in the rocky sides of Marko's vault, and that his good horse,

¹ Vide *The Ballads of Marko Kraljević*, by David H. Low (1922).

Sharatz, bites away patiently above. Thus, little by little, as Sharatz nibbles, will the stone be worn away, and the sword-blade one day be laid bare. One day, too, Marko will reappear mounted on Sharatz,¹ sword in hand, to gather his people round his standard and lead them gloriously against the Turks. Yes, you would have been told all this—before 1912! But with the passing of time, how can prophecy remain always prophecy!—some of it surely is meant to be fulfilled? Why doubt, therefore, that the Serbian soldiers plainly beheld him on November 5, 1912, in those never-to-be-forgotten and rapturous days when, marching with the thrill of victory over ancient ground, they stormed the rugged heights to which Marko himself was beckoning them on? Was it too good to be true! Rather was it so good to them that at last it must be true . . . and on they went!

It is one of the remarkable things about Yugoslav legend that so much of it has come true. For instance, legend describes the horror of Marko at being called upon to fight against the Christian Byzantines—Greeks or “Romans”, as often (with a sort of historical shorthand) they were written down in Serbian story—for had not Byzantium once been the Second Rome! Yes, Marko Kraljevitch was stricken with horror at being summoned to fight against “the Christian Romans”; yet as a vassal of the Turks, which at one time he most certainly was, he could not well refuse. His spirit was not, however, even then really defeated, for Marko was one of those souls who could at any

¹ See note, pp. 199–200.

moment take arms against himself—take up arms against himself and win! For as he went with the Moslems against Christendom this was Marko's prayer: "O God! do Thou this day destroy all those who fight against Christendom, and foremost Marko!"

During the course of the Great War a lady of the West wrote in a newspaper deploring the influence upon the Yugoslav mind of Marko Kralyevitch, whom she regarded as representative merely of filibuster and braggadocio. It would be as fair-minded or as sportsmanlike for a gentleman of the Near East to write in the same terms about our own Richard Lionheart or Hereward the Wake. Toward a right understanding of things Miss L. F. Waring did signal service when, in her admirable little volume on Serbian History in the Home University Library, she pointed out with so clear an insight that to Serbians Marko Kralyevitch is but a symbol of their own unhappy fate. For what was his position: he was bound to a foreign allegiance; he could not at the same time be loyal both to his Suzerain and to his own people, death alone seeming to afford him escape from conflicting duties. Something of this dilemma will be found to breathe in the great Poem now before the reader.

The Crescent and the Cross—those symbols twain: how deeply and how widely different in the last resort are the things for which they stand! One great undertone of *Gorski Vijenac*, or *The Mountain Wreath*, is this: "Lo! the blowing out of one's own light; disloyalty within the camp; the spoiling of the spirit of the

garrison; intimate friends or kinsmen deliberately turning off to a lower interpretation of life!" Thus we find the blind Iguman Stephen saying to his Montenegrins:

Now slaves to Islam, brothers of your blood! . . .
 Dishonour's curse—already it doth fall! . . .
 United all, were toil enough for you!
 It is your destiny to bear the Cross,
 To strive alike with kinsfolk and with strangers. . . .
 Heavy the thorny crown, yet sweet the guerdon, dear the goal!

With the passing of Tsar Dushan, the Stranger is at the gate and erelong will be within the camp: the crown of thorns is near.

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And when the crown of thorns was placed on the nation's head it rested there sharply and heavily. "At the time when your William Shakespeare was writing his Tragedies in ink," said the present Bishop of Ochrida to an audience in London, "we Serbian people were writing ours in blood. At the time when Adam Smith was writing his *Wealth of Nations*, the Serbian people did not even possess their own bodies: our very physical life belonged to our oppressors!" Small and beleaguered countries often give birth to shining proverbs, and *The Mountain Wreath* has some pithy wisdom.

When fortune smiles 'tis easy to be good;
 Adversity finds out the valiant soul.

One may still hear from the lips of living men much

about the sufferings and sorrows of their grandfathers and great-grandfathers under Islam,¹ and the traveller may discover many proverbs coined in the school of stiff experience if he should have time to go where such proverbs may be found, e.g. :—

Twelve poor apostles did more good than twelve Sultans.

The Cross shines in the heart, the Crescent only in the hand.

Seeing should make men wise, Suffering wiser,² but Death makes them wisest of all.

Be humble, for the worst thing in the world is of the same stuff as yourself. Be confident, for the stars are of the same stuff as yourself.

There is more beauty in a humble superstition than in proud and vainglorious wisdom.

A Turk asked a Serb why the Serbs were always reminding themselves and other people of the Field of Kossovo. "Because", said the Serb, "our dead are better than your living!"

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But of Kossovo the not impatient reader may later hear more!

J. W. W.

¹ *Vide* pp. 204-5: Speech of Abbot Stephen.

² *Vide* p. 206, where Abbot Stephen, speaking of selfish or callous mirth, says: "It would come harder to me than to weep—*Weeping is song with tears!*" (ll. 2545-7).

THE MOUNTAIN WREATH

AN HISTORICAL HAPPENING TOWARDS THE
CLOSE OF THE XVIITH CENTURY

Written down in Verse

BY

P. P. N.

BISHOP OF MONTENEGRO



KARAGEORGE
"The Father of Serbia"

TO THE MEMORY OF KARAGEORGE,¹ THE FATHER OF SERBIA

[The dots . . . indicate that the Poet was compelled to delete several lines from his original dedication.]

P R O U D be this Age of mine, beyond all other age;
It shall have martial memory, the Poet's song engage;
For in Bellona's cradle was bred a brood of eight,
She tended them and nursed them while the big world
did wait—

Napoleon, Duke Wellington, Charles, Blücher, Sou-
vorov, 5
Karageorge, the tyrant's scourge, Schwartzenberg and
Koutozov.

Strong Ares made them drunken, intoxicate for glory,
The whole wide earth did give to them as theatre for
their story!

'Tis from the jungles great that lions great appear,

3. *Bellona*, Roman goddess of war.

5. *Charles*, Archduke of Austria, the first to defeat Napoleon,
at Aspern, near Vienna, May 21-22, 1809.

Blücher, the Prussian General who joined the English at Water-
loo, June 18, 1815.

Souvorov, a Russian General, who, assisting the Austrians, drove
the French out of Northern Italy within a period of five months
in the year 1799.

6. *Schwartzenberg*, the Austrian General, who in 1813 and 1814
acted as Generalissimo of the Allied Armies against Napoleon.

Koutozov, a Russian General distinguished in the wars with
the Turks and with Napoleon.

7. *Ares*, Ancient Greek God of War.

¹ *Karageorge*. Vide footnote, pp. 31-2.

And 'tis the peoples mighty who genius should rear ; 10
Great realms may breed the hero, grant space for
glorious deeds,

Triumphal wreaths down casting as onward still he
speeds ;

But Karageorge immortal, from Topola unknown,
His path beset on every hand, attained a nobler throne ;
He raised his people in Christ's Name, broke the
Barbarian's chains, 15

Brought back from Death the Serbian folk, reviv'd
their pale remains—

Secret of fame immortal—arous'd to nobler part,
When knightliness was languishing brought his people
lion heart.

Pharaoh's flashing heat 'fore Karageorge cool'd down,
When with high ardour chivalrous he nerved the
Serbian arm, 20

Before him trembled Stamboul, father of plague and gore,
And e'en the Turks swore by his sword, no other oath
they swore !

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14. *Topola*, a village some twenty miles north-west of Kragujevatz. In *Topola* Karageorge had his fort ; there he was buried, and some say that he was born there.

19. Pharaoh's, etc., the fiery aggressiveness of the Turkish Sultan.

Indeed for all the valiant is Tragedy in store,
Thy head was destin'd as the price of the fair wreath
it wore.

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Let later kindred judge the deed, 25
And give to each as each his meed :
On Voukashin the Traitor, on Boris for his crime

23. For all the valiant is tragedy in store: this is a constant note in *Gorski Vijenac*, that the noblest lives end tragically, even as Christ Himself was crucified. But the counter-thought is equally present between the lines of our Poem, namely, that such crucifixions are—by some divine principle at work in the very heart of things—always followed by a resurrection.

24. Is a hint that Karageorge was done to death from jealous motives at the instigation of a rival.

26. This is a reference to Boris Godounoff, brother of the consort of the Russian Emperor, Feodor I, 1584-98, who in the year 1591 compassed the death of the youthful heir to the throne, in the hope of becoming Tsar himself. The story of Boris is well known amongst the Southern Slavs, and the drama is frequently seen upon the stage.

26. King Vukashin is reported to have treacherously brought about the death of Tsar Urosh, the last of the lustrous Nemanya Dynasty. But though this belief is widespread amongst the people, it does not seem to have any foundation in fact, since historical records would show that Vukashin died in September 1371, and Tsar Urosh on December 4th of the same year. There is a street in Belgrade named after Tsar Urosh.

27. Pison Calpurnius Piso, the trusted servant of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, according to all accounts poisoned Germanicus, the nephew of the Emperor, who was greatly beloved by the

Let fall the curse and nemesis throughout all after-
time;
The hateful name of Pison no calendar shall soil;
Orestes' justice (Heaven's thunder!) shall give Aegisthus
toil.

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Upon thy shining grave let Envy outpour spite,
But shall they thus put out thy soul's celestial light? 30
Ye forms with hatred stain'd, think ye the victory
gain'd?

Not so ye quench this flame; it shall but burn more
bright!

The ever-growing radiance no centuries shall disturb
Of thy light-diffusing torch on the pathway of the Serb.

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people. To escape the consequences of his crime he killed himself, and the Senate decided to obliterate his name from the list of Roman Consuls. "Calendar" is the Bishop's poetic rendering of *fasti consulares*.

28. Ægisthus killed Agamemnon, the great commander of the Greeks against the Trojans, with the help of the latter's own wife, who had admitted Ægisthus as her paramour. But Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, avenged his father's death, killing both Ægisthus and Clytemnestra.

29. It has been hinted already that "the Father of Serbia" had his rivals and detractors. One reproach hurled against him was his flight from Serbia in the year 1813. Mere detraction only throws into stronger relief the luminous power of Karageorge.

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The simple Serbian bride may still a Dushan bear, 35
 The Serbian mother-heart still a brave Obilich rear,
 And heroes like Pojarsky of ever dauntless face;
 'Tis a high-hearted purpose inspires a suffering race;
 Now flees the dreadful curse, with all its wrack and
 scaith;

Their Father's vow the Serbs fulfil and vindicate his
 faith. 40

J. W. W.

Original Dedication written in Vienna,
New Year, 1847.

[The dots indicate that the Poet was compelled (by difficult and painful circumstances) to delete several lines from his original dedication.]

CONCERNING ORTHOGRAPHY

THE Cyrillic alphabet, so called after St. Cyril, the Slavonic apostle of the IXth Century, as used in Serbia and Montenegro, is purely phonetic, each sign standing for one and only one sound—a claim which can hardly be put forward for any other alphabet in Europe. *The Mountain Wreath* is practically always published in this Cyrillic type—which to all who are familiar with it must always possess a charm of its own. Side by side with the Cyrillic type one finds in Jugoslavia (*jug*, pronounced *youg*, meaning *south* in Serbian) the Latin alphabet, as used by the Croats and Slovenes who inhabit the more northern and western parts of the Kingdom. It would have been both awkward and superfluous to have introduced any words in Cyrillic type into the work before the reader; though Serbo-Croatian spelling, with the diacritic signs which characterize it, has not been avoided here and there.

The Mountain Wreath, for instance, has been referred to—as it always is, when use is made of the Latin type, in Jugoslavia—as *Gorski Vijenac*—pronounced *Gorskee Veeenatz*; and the name *Milosh* has been printed in the text as one finds it in Serbo-Croatian—*Miloš*. The printers of Europe and America put the little Montenegrin capital into three and sometimes four guises; the simpler and more usual spelling in South-Eastern Europe has been followed here, viz. *Cetinje*, pronounced *Tseteenyeh*, with an energetic emphasis upon the first syllable. The reader may possibly be aware of the following Serbo-Croatian alphabetic values:—

Vowels:

<i>a</i> as English <i>a</i> in father.	<i>o</i> as English <i>o</i> in Olivia.
<i>e</i> as English <i>e</i> in pet.	<i>u</i> as English <i>oo</i> in fool or
<i>i</i> as English <i>i</i> in machine.	[<i>u</i> in rule.

Some Consonants:

<i>g</i> as English <i>g</i> in go.	tween the English <i>t</i> in
<i>ž</i> as English <i>s</i> in pleasure,	tune and <i>ch</i> in chalk
[or French <i>j</i> in jour.	<i>h</i> often as an ordinary Eng-
<i>lj</i> as English <i>li</i> in million.	lish <i>h</i> , sometimes like <i>ch</i>
<i>nj</i> as English <i>n</i> in new.	in Scottish loch.
<i>r</i> as Scottish <i>r</i> in merry.	<i>c</i> as English <i>ts</i> in lots.
(Can never be “passed	<i>č</i> as English <i>ch</i> in church.
over” as in English.)	<i>ġ</i> and <i>dž</i> as English <i>j</i> in John.
<i>c</i> not to be found precisely	<i>š</i> as English <i>s</i> in ship.
in English: a sound be-	

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

TO THE GENTLE READER!

IT was in the year 1913 that a young Serbian officer, who had long been waist-deep in snow, in the operations of the winter 1912-13 around Adrianople, introduced me with unmistakable affection and enthusiasm to what he considered one of the most characteristic and appealing poems of his race—*Gorski Vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*). He had obviously been through very rough experiences, but with a laugh he threw one a quotation from the Poem; which, being interpreted, amounted to this:

When Fortune smiles 'tis easy to be good:
Adversity reveals the hero-soul!

This young officer had also other quotations from *Gorski Vijenac*, some of them tragic and some humorous, and he explained to me that this Poem was a great national document. We parted. Then I heard again about the Poem from the Southern Slav savant, Dr. Bogdan Popović, whom Sir John Lavery, speaking at the Grafton Galleries in 1917, styled "the Ruskin of Serbia"; next, from Professor Pavle Popovitch, several times Rector of Belgrade University; and then again, with renewed emphasis, from another great Serbian scholar and thinker, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovitch, whose personality and writings are well known in both Great Britain and America.

Towards the close of the Great War, during days of

stress and strain and sometimes very much “under fire”, in close companionship with a Serbian friend,¹ who was very ill at the time, I prepared a rough-draft translation into English of the whole Poem. When talking to audiences made up of students—sometimes entirely British, sometimes largely American—in different parts of the world, it seemed that quotations from these rough-draft lines aroused some interest. Nevertheless, the Poem in its tentative Anglo-Saxon garb was thrown into a far corner, where it remained forgotten for several years. After a lapse of almost a decade the writer was requested to give various passages from it before a number of American and British friends who had a real interest in, and a more than bowing acquaintance with, the Southern Slav peoples. The result of this (and some other readings to not inappreciative audiences who knew something about the matter in hand) was a cordial request to give the manuscript to the public. The outcome of that request is the present volume.

The Translator is not unacquainted with the difficulties as well as the beauties of the original—for Southern Slavs themselves, indeed, the original is by no means always easy reading!—and yet he ventures to hope that those who read may gain some additional insight into the psychology of a profoundly interesting people. The late Dr. Mandell Creighton, a Cambridge University Rede Lecturer as well as a former Bishop of Peterborough and Bishop of London, once remarked : “Suffering penetrates to regions where thought alone

¹ Prof. Milan J. Maizner, of Belgrade.

can never reach." That is a pregnant saying, and certainly people who have never suffered are not likely to reach the innermost spirit of this Poem; for this simple reason, that the Poem was born in an atmosphere of suffering—*prolonged* suffering; the prolongation of the suffering being the crucial point!

Before the Great War some of us in the West were at least in danger of being spoilt by the superabounding conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of the day. Four and a half years of tribulation taught millions of us, as the Bishop says, that Suffering can penetrate into regions where Thought alone can never reach. But what if the tribulation had been not for four and a half years but four and a half centuries! The Southern Slav peoples have gone through a hard school—a hard school of long continuance. They have been kept down to some stiff realities. They have never at any time been in a position to afford to throw away their wits. But even when their wits failed them they found that there was such a thing as living by Faith; for they came into moments when they were compelled to believe in God or die of a broken heart. Thus it is not surprising that Serbia has been a country famous for proverbs and pithy sayings. Pithy sayings are generally found in countries which have had a hard childhood and perhaps a not too easy youth. "Follow Christ, if need be, even into the devil's house, for He can show you the way out." "Fight for freedom like an archangel; but, having gained it, live in it as a saint." "Pity two creatures: An ox with a thorn in his foot, and a man whose feet have never felt a thorn."

There are persons who cannot, or who will not, see a paradox. Such persons should put themselves to school for an hour or two, if they wish to do no injustice to Vladika Danilo. His is a soul in love with harmony and "sweetness and light"; yet he finds himself plunged into rancour, darkness, and discord. How many thousands found themselves in the same position during the years 1914-18! But the adoption of the position of the "conscientious objector" would have brought peace to none. It would have brought peace to none perhaps, because the philosophy of the "conscientious objector", as it was expressed a hundred times in public during the Great War, was felt by the men at the Front and in the submarines and mine-sweepers to be manifestly partial and incomplete. The Bible was always greater than any of the tirades of premature "pacifists", and many a man with a sensitive soul in the trenches consoled himself (like Vladika Danilo) with the fact that even the great Apostle of Love, St. John the Divine, was led in his vision to see war in heaven. "In heaven itself, worse can befall than war!" In the course of his pilgrimage this was a point of vantage which Bishop Danilo in Montenegro also reached :

Surely 'twas Hell, not Heaven, where first was War,
 Where first infernal passions woke and stirred—
 War, which makes Heaven impossible in a word,
 And Murder bids her bloody gate unbar!

As well might one, under the Juggernaut car,
 And knowing all annihilate shall be,
 Babble of life and immortality
 As call that "Heaven" where hell and hatred are.

Yet there was war in heaven, as on this star,
 Yea, even there, was War's red flag unfurled,
 As if High God would warn a craven world
 In Heaven itself, worse can befall than war.¹

But to turn from the animating spirit of *The Mountain Wreath* to its outward form. No good translation ² ever gave only a replica of the mere outward form of the original. A translation should surely aim at catching before all else the living breath and spirit of its original. Working thus as "ever in his great Taskmaster's eye"—

¹ *War Verses*, Coulson Kernahan.

² Every translator, however competent, is hampered by the necessity, if not also the difficulty, of faithfully rendering his original. Even so great a master of form and expression as Tennyson, when he is taking a foreign metrical model as a framework for purely original composition, though in this case unfettered by the necessities and difficulties of faithful translation, must still be bound by the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of his native speech. After all, English is not Latin, nor is it Greek, and it cannot be expected to do, upon the same metrical framework, what Greek or Latin can. Every classical scholar knows, for instance, that Tennyson's "Alcaics" on Milton are no *alcaics* in the strict classical sense of the term—though here again "where the letter would have killed, the spirit giveth life". Alcaic metre, for example, demands a long fifth syllable; whereas at the very start Tennyson's fifth syllables in his first two lines must, from the linguistic necessities of the case, be short and "weak". The whole poem, however, is deft, ingenious, and impressive, with a music all its own. With the intuition of genius our great singers follow one great luminous principle: they make their *rhythm* clear and allow *syllables* to find their place in relation to it. And not only so: a characteristic feature of English verse is the freedom with which *pauses* replace syllables. The most inspired songs of our master-poets abound in fascinating illustrations of the interchangeability of silence and sound. Our greatest national song-treasures could be ruined completely by filling in their subtle silences with sound, on the method of counting syllables with the fingers!

even if the sense be less sublime than Milton's!—the translator will pass “self-denying ordinances” against himself, and refrain from attempts to seek effect or prettiness at the expense of fidelity. The grace and the music of the original language heard amid its mountains remains its own. Its flexile lines with the sonorous participles and pleasant vocatives remain ever as a special fragrance which cannot be transferred. The “genius” of the Bishop’s Montenegrin dialect and the genius of our Anglo-Saxon speech are different. But the dignity and the tenderness of the Bishop’s Prayer in the original should also be found in the English translation¹; nor should the mingling of haunting melancholy and martial grimness be absent from the English version of the song of Vuk of Lieshovostoup as he sings to his gouslé²; while, upon the other hand, the quickness and the humour of the Montenegrins’ discussion of the round of Venice³ and the visit to the Doge, or the lively talk with the old Witch,⁴ cannot bear the irksome weight of an unvarying decasyllabic line.

One characteristic feature of the Serbian language—it has been often styled “the Italian of the Balkan Peninsula”—is the fullness and the purity of its vowels. In the Serbian speech nothing is “swallowed”: there is, for instance, no such specimen of “swallowing” as is found in “kūmftābl” for *comfortable*! Moreover, past participles end in pure and rich *oh*’s and *ah*’s for the most part, and 2nd person singulars never present such sounds as *shouldst*, *wouldst*, *didst*, *hadst*, etc.

¹ *Vide* p. 112.

² *Vide* p. 161.

³ *Vide* pp. 145–58.

⁴ *Vide* pp. 184–9.

Again, there is no article in the Serbian language, either definite or indefinite—that is to say, there is no literal equivalent of our *a*, *an*, or *the*; the duties done by our English article being performed in Serbian in other ways; for instance, adjectives are inflected to indicate reference to a particular object—in other words, the Serbian language has no lack of precision in this direction, the desired effect being attained in a different way. These very scant remarks are intended to be merely suggestive. The reflective and sympathetic reader will perceive the bearing of linguistic differences upon the task of translating a poem.¹ How frequently do our English sentences begin with an unimportant word, such as “And” or “Of” or “The”, and English lines of verse naturally often do the same; e.g.:

The weight of all the hopes of half the world. (TENNYSON.)

And I shall shortly be with them that rest. (MILTON.)

The foreign student who may casually take up this unpretentious volume is asked to note what English scansion really means. It does *not* mean attaching a definite value to every syllable of every word. The foreign reader may have at times to note that in English verse syllables—*mere* syllables—are handled by our greatest poets with much freedom; that it is rhythm, punctuating accent and periodicity, or *time-measure*, which are all-important. There is something beyond and outside of mere syllables which supplements their

¹ Such considerations apply with especial force, for instance, to the translation of the Southern Slav mourning songs and lamentations, *vide* pp. 171–5, lines 1913–63.

deficiency. When Burns writes,

The wan moon is setting beyond the white wave,
And *time* is setting with me,

it is obvious that another syllable might be inserted in the second line; one might, for example, insert the word *now*; yet is it not the quantity carried by the monosyllable *time*, or perhaps rather the fraction of silence that follows upon it, which makes these two lines poetry?

It was pointed out many years ago¹ how subtly the monotony of common "eights and sixes" is varied by Sydney Dobell in his well-known ballad:

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

To make the complaint that the third line in this verse, instead of being an "eight", is shorter than the first, would be captious indeed! The six syllables of this third line are clearly intended to fill the same *time* as the eight syllables in the first line, and they do so—in virtue of that structural element, the recognition of which is essential to the adequate reading of British verse. In our regular "heroic" verse of ten syllables it is not difficult to discover lines of nine syllables, like Shakespeare's

Stay, the king has thrown his warder down!
Richard II, Act I, Sc. 3.

¹ See *A Study of Metre*. By T. S. Omond. London, 1930.



Photo]

H.M. King Alexander I of Yugoslavia returning from the Nyegosh Monument on Lovćen Summit, September 1925

IV. Benčić

(In this instance the schoolboy feels the reason why.)

Seeing that this volume may fall into the hands of readers whose mother-tongue is not English,¹ an apology need scarcely be made for offering these few remarks in regard to a subject upon which a treatise might be written.

The writer desires to convey his sincere thanks once again to those many Yugoslav friends who have talked over *Gorski Vijenac* with him, not excepting in this connection H.M. King Alexander I and his gracious Consort, Queen Marie of Yugoslavia, whose sympathy and encouragement have been no small incentive to the production of the volume.

JAMES W. WILES, M.A.
Sometime Reader in English in the
University of Belgrade.

VILLA CAMBRIDGE,
TOPCHIDERSKO BRDO, BELGRADE.
June 19, 1929.

¹ While, on the other hand, those English-speaking people who wish to become better acquainted with Serbo-Croatian should consult that most attractive and lucidly written book, *A Practical Grammar of the Serbo-Croatian Language*, by Dr. John Dyneley Prince, Minister Plenipotentiary of the U.S.A. in Yugoslavia; published by the National Press, Belgrade, 1929. Another excellent Serbian Grammar is that by Dr. Dragutin Subotić and Nevill Forbes, M.A. Oxon, published by the Clarendon Press.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

VLADIKA ¹ DANILO, Bishop of Montenegro, from 1697-1737.

IGUMAN ² STEFAN, a blind and aged abbot.

SERDAR ³ JANKO DJURASHKOVITCH, chief of a Montenegrin house.

SERDARS RADOGNA, VOUKOTA, and IVAN PETROVITCH.

KNEZ ⁴ RADÉ, brother of BISHOP DANILO.

KNEZ BAIKO.

KNEZ ROGAN.

KNEZ YANKO.

KNEZ NIKOLA.

VOIVODA ⁵ DRASHKO.

VOIVODA MILIYA.

VOIVODA STANKO.

VOIVODA BATRITCH.

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH.

OBRAD.

VUK RASLAPCHEVITCH.

VOUKOTA MRVALIEVITCH.

VUK TOMANOVITCH.

A MULTITUDE.

BOGDAN DJURASHKOVITCH, brother of Serdar Janko.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH.

¹ Vladika: Serbian for *Bishop*.

² Iguman: abbot or prior.

³ Serdar: An authority, sometimes civil, sometimes military, having power to punish and imprison.

⁴ Knez: a prince, leader, chieftain.

⁵ Voivoda: a marshal, a duke, in the original philological sense; leader of a host.

VUK MANDUSHITCH.

VUK LIESHEVOSTOUPATZ, who sings to the gouslé.

POPA ¹ MITCHO, a priest of the Pravoslav Church.

THE SISTER OF VOIVODA BATRITCH.

HADJI ²-ALI MEDOVITCH, a Mohammedan Religious Judge or Kadi.

SKENDER-AGA,³ a Turkish nobleman.

MOUSTAI-KADI, another Mussulman.

ARSLAN-AGA MOUHADINOVITCH.

FERAT ZATCHIR, a kavaz-basha,⁴ or chief of a Turkish body-guard.

RIDJAL OSMAN, another Mussulman.

AN OLD WOMAN, a witch.

¹ Popa or pop: an ordinary parish priest or clergyman, i.e. sveštenik—not a celibate—in the Pravoslav Church.

² Hadji or Hadžija: a *pilgrim* either to Jerusalem or to Mecca; Christian Serbs bore the title if they had made the journey to the Holy Land, just as Serbian Mussulmans or Turks did who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

³ Aga: a Turkish chief officer.

⁴ Kavaz: an attendant upon a Pasha, but also in Montenegro a guard in authority at a door of entrance, taking the names of comers, and either handing them in or sending off the person according to circumstances. Kavazbaša: chief guard. The term *baša* was often given out of respect or in honour to persons lower in rank than the *aga* or the *beg* or nobleman.

SCOPE AND SETTING OF THE POEM

ONE of the most arresting and beautiful of the works of Prince-Bishop Petar II Petrović Njegoš is beyond all doubt his *Gorski Vijenac*, or *Mountain Wreath*; an alternative title to which—he himself thought—might have been *Montenegro's Glory*.

The scene of the drama—or perhaps, more strictly speaking, of his panoramic pictures—is rugged Montenegro at the end of the XVIIth Century. It was not until more than one hundred years after the Serbian defeat on the Plain of Kossovo that the Turks more or less subdued the Montenegrins, and held them in a relative subjection for two hundred years. Subdued in 1499, the Montenegrins freed themselves in 1697. From that time, right down to the days of King Nikola I, the paternal monarch of Cetinje—whose grandson, H.M. Alexander I, is the reigning sovereign of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—the Montenegrins recognized as their representative Heads the Bishops of Cetinje, and the Prince-Bishops of the House of Petrović Njegoš, these latter exercising authority from 1782 to 1860; our ecclesiastical poet, Petar II Petrović Njegoš, being the second of his line, 1830–51.

The author of *The Mountain Wreath* always held that the most signal service rendered by the clans of Montenegro to the rest of the Serbian race was the keeping alive of that “spark of freedom” until it should leap into flame in that struggle for liberation under Karageorge. To Karageorge, in fact, as we have seen, he dedicates his Poem.

To a due understanding of the pervading emotion of the Poem it must be borne in mind that a number of the Montenegrins themselves, like their cousins in Bosnia, had become perverts to Islam. If this be not realized the reader at once misses much of its passion and pathos, and more than half of its force. The dominating *motif*, the constant undertone of the poem, is the forcible deliverance of Montenegro from these Montenegrin Mohammedans—when all efforts to persuade them by reason and by argument to return to the *Pravoslav* or orthodox faith of their fathers have finally failed.

The progression of the narrative unfolds vivid and charming pictures of Montenegrin life and custom.

[The numbering of the lines is according to the original Poem; they are not, of course, adhered to with absolute rigidity in the English translation.]

ARGUMENT

THE Montenegrins are gathered together on the rugged heights of Mount Lovćen on the eve of the Whitsuntide Festival. It is the dead hour of night; all are asleep. All apparently, except the Prince-Bishop, Vladika Danilo, who in his sad soliloquy surveys the relentless enslavement by the Moslem Power of vast areas of the world—the Saracens reaching even the interior of France, where they were met by Charles Martel, A.D. 732. Later, Constantinople fell, A.D. 1453, and yet later all the Balkans. "From out far Asia where they have their nest, this Devil's brood doth gulp the nations up." Bitterly he laments the Serbian overthrow—rendered more bitter by the instability and falsity of many of his own race. He is nigh to despair because of the cleavage amongst the Serbian people themselves. To him the horizon is black indeed. His people are as wisps of straw tossed upon the wind. He has almost lost faith in God. His immediate world has become his hell, and men but demons in disguise. Imagine the despondency, akin to despair, of the Montenegrin patriot as he gazes down on centuries of unlifting oppression!

“The Crescent and the Cross—those symbols twain!”

“When Fortune smiles, ’tis easy to be good;

Adversity doth prove the hero-soul!”

Nyegosh.



Photo]

[V. Benichik
Vladika Nikolai Velimirovitch, D.D., Bishop of Ochrida, at the Nyeqosh Memorial Celebrations,
September 1925, outside the Monastery at Cetinje. The coffin contains the bones of the Poet

THE MOUNTAIN WREATH

VLADIKA DANILO (*in contemplation*)

THE Dragon see, with seven mantles red,
Wielding two swords and crownèd with two crowns;
Great-grandchild of the faithless Turk, with Koran!
Behind him hordes of that accursèd breed,
That they may devastate the whole wide earth, 5
As locusts pestilent lay waste the fields!
Had not the Rock of France its onrush curbed,
Arabia's flood had surely deluged all!

1-3. The great Mohammedan power as a whole, represented in the person of Caliph and of Sultan, was often styled the seven-headed insatiable dragon of Asia and of Europe. The red mantles symbolize pomp and power; the two swords and two crowns, the double dominion—eastwards into Asia and westwards into Europe. According to old Oriental stories the Turk comes down from one of the eight sons of Japheth, who was the eldest son of Noah. Included among the descendants of the eldest son of Noah were the Tartars and Mongols. With a picturesque stroke the poet connects the Turk as he sees him with the earlier Sultans and Caliphs.

7. A reference, of course, to the victory of Karl Martel over the Saracens at Tours in 732 A.D.—one of the “Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World.”

8. Osman: Osman, 1299-1326, founded in Asia Minor an independent Turkish State. The Turks relate that Osman had this dream: From the breast of the powerful Sheik Elebadije—whose daughter he loved—the moon appeared and came to his own bosom, and from thence grew a tree which overshadowed the world! This daughter whom Osman loved was called by the Turks in admiration Kameran, or moon-like. How the Sheik actually regarded the dream may be gathered from the fact that he subsequently gave this daughter to Osman in marriage, and their son was Orkan—Orkan or Urhan, with a guttural h—who, flourishing from 1326-59, was the first Turkish ruler to consolidate his power in Europe by the capture of Gallipoli and the terrain round about.

Osman—infernal dream—was monarch crown'd;
 The pale moon wedded, she his apple fair; 10
 From whom sprang Orkan, Europe's evil guest;
 And now Byzantium's realm is nothing more
 Than the youthful Theodora's dowry—
 The star of destiny hangs darkly over her.
 Now Paleologos bids Murat in, 15
 To bury in one grave both Greeks and Serbs.
 Their own ends sought both Branković and Ger-
 luka—

13. In 1346 Orkan received in marriage Teodora, the Byzantine Princess, on account of which the Turks later demanded Constantinople as their own.

15. In the days of John V Paleologos, the Byzantines were unwise enough to call in the Turks to help to settle their own difficulties, and later on they invited Orkan to go against the Serbs, so strengthening Moslem power in Europe and preparing the way for Sultan Murat I, 1359-89, thus ruining ultimately both Greeks and Serbs. It was Sultan Murat who, in 1389, inflicted with superior forces the crushing defeat of the *Plain of Kossovo* upon the Serbs, when the flower of the nation perished along with the noble king, Tsar Lazar. Tsar Lazar fought with the bravery of desperation. But after his horse had been killed beneath him he was beset by enemies, captured, and beheaded in the tent of the dying Sultan; for Sultan Murat had already been stabbed by Milosh Obilich, who had penetrated to his tent under pretext of submission. The Turkish firman sent by Bayazed, the son of Murat, to Suleiman-beg, the Kadhi of Broussa, states: "When, after his own wish, the Serbian fighter was allowed to kiss the feet of the illustrious Sultan, he drew a poisonous dagger hidden in his sleeve, and boldly thrust it into the body of the Sultan, sorely wounding him. Thus he allowed the illustrious Sultan to drink the sherbet of martyrdom. After this deed Milosh tried to escape through the soldiers, who shone like stars in the sky, but was caught by them and cut in pieces."

17. The treachery with which Vuk Brankovich is always charged in the Serbian folk-songs is not an historically ascertained

Meet recompense Mohammed gave to Gerluka!
 From out far Asia where they have their nest,
 This Devil's brood doth gulp the nations up; 20

fact. On the other hand, his rivalry with Milosh is probable; not less probable is the story that Milosh had been slandered as a traitor in front of the king, and that he decided to kill the Sultan simply to demonstrate his loyalty. Be this as it may, it is certain that he went to the Turkish camp, penetrated into Murat's tent, and mortally wounded him. . . . Gerluka was not a Serbian but a Greek, as indeed his name shows; but the poet thinks of him in association with Vuk Brankovich because his name has come down in story also as a traitor—as one who by his falsity facilitated the oncoming of the Turks. For was it not Gerluka who, while the honoured and greatly trusted Admiral of the Byzantine monarch, Constantine XI, basely betrayed his sovereign to the Turks! Mohammed II, however, instead of favouring and rewarding him, had him put to death—with confidence it is asserted, on the ignominious charge that he would not allow his son to take service in the harem!

18. The off-hand, dramatic force of the short Serbian line is only possible in a highly inflected speech. With one gesture, so to speak, the poet flings Gerluka before Mohammed: to come face to face with Mohammed II, that is enough for Gerluka; who, by such a man, will be paid back in his own coin!

20-5. Murat I, 1359-89, defeated the Serbs under King Vukashin on the River Maritza in 1371, and proceeded to subdue Macedonia, advancing right up to the old town of Nish. And then, on *Vidov Dan*, in the year 1389, came the overwhelming disaster of Kossovo. There perished Tsar Lazar, perhaps the best beloved of all the national heroes. The defeat of Kossovo ended the most glorious chapter in Serbian history, and the anniversary of the great battle—Vidov Dan—is still religiously kept throughout the land. During the XIIth, XIIIth, and XIVth Centuries Serbia was a rich and powerful Empire, and some of the great characters of that period still stand undimmed in the hearts of the people. The memory of all that was lost upon Kossovo became a burning fire, smouldering for centuries in the breast of the entire nation. This catastrophe gained in the national mind the deepest religious significance; it forged an inner moral

Each day a nation, as night-owl takes bird :
 Murat takes Serbia, and Bosnia Bayazed ;
 Murat Epirus, and Mohammed Greece ;
 Then the two Selims Africa and Cyprus—
 Each takes something till nothing is there left ! 25
Dreadful the deeds that happen day by day ;

bond that kept together all the scattered parts of the race, transferring the aspirations towards liberty from one generation to another. All the heroes who fell in the fight against Sultan Murat "for the Holy Cross and for Freedom Golden" thus lived again; for they were resurrected in songs which poured new force and new hopes into the hearts of the enslaved singers. Serbia, indeed, became the land of Sorrow and of Song. It was the Song which gave heart to endure the Sorrow, and which kept alive the fire still slowly burning under the ashes of their crushed religion and lost liberty. This fire burst into flame in the peasant revolution against the Turks in the year 1804, the final result of which was the liberation of Serbia, leading a hundred years later to the liberation of the whole Yugoslav race.

21. The bird referred to is the large owl known to naturalists as the *bubo maximus*, to be found probably almost as frequently to-day in the woods and forests of Jugoslavia as it was in the time of Vladika Danilo. Lord Charles Connyngham shot a magnificent specimen on the island of Krk, off the coast of Croatia, in January 1927, and presented it to the Reading Room at "Therapeia", Crikvenica, near Sushak. The translator saw a large specimen rise from the forests bordering the beautiful chain of thirteen lakes at Plitvitsa in July 1929. The casual and distant observer quite easily mistakes this powerful bird for an eagle. The eagle, however, and also the falcon, as will be noticed later, are regarded with great affection in Jugoslavia, whereas the epithet here is pointedly opprobrious.

22. Bayazed, or Bayazit, overran Bosnia in 1398, and by 1463 Mohammed II had completely absorbed that country.

23. Before he was killed on Kossovo, Sultan Murat I had gained control of Epirus, 1381-5. A century later, in 1453, Mohammed II had driven out both Greek rule and Greek culture from Constantinople.

24. Selim I, in 1517, ended the Mameluke Authority in Egypt; while Selim II took Cyprus from the Venetians in 1570.

Too small is this wide world for Hell's great maw,
Which, though feeding ever, never knows repletion !
Yanko doth fight for Vladislaus dead ;
But why fight on when fighting gives not aid ? 30
Brave heart of Obilić beats in Skenderbeg,
And yet he pines in pitiless exile.—
But what can I ! What helper is me nigh ?
We have but few strong arms ; our strength is small ;
We are as wisps of straw tossed on the wind ; 35
As orphan'd sad, forsaken of the world,
I see my people sleep a deadly sleep,
No parent's hand to wipe away my tears ;
God's Heaven is shut above my head,
Giving no answer to my cries and prayers. 40
This world is now become a hell,
And men but demons in disguise.
Oh, dark, dark Day ! oh, outlook ever black !
My fearing folk held ever underfoot !

29 and 30. *Yanko fights for Vladislav though dead*: Yanko, or Janko, is the Slav title for the great hero, Hunyadi Yanosh or *Janos*, whose name is still a household word in Central and South-East Europe, for the stubborn resistance he put up against the Turks after the death of Vladislav in 1444. But though Hunyadi Janos fought desperately to maintain the dominions of the fallen Vladislav, he could not save them, since after the bloody fight by *Mohacs*, in 1526, the Turks subdued Hungary.

31 and 32. With great valour Skenderbeg defended Northern Albania from the oncoming Turk over a period of twenty-five years, and died resisting mid the Albanian wilds. With a touch of intimate sympathy the poet speaks of his struggle as one long sad exile, A.D. 1443-67. In 1478 the Turks put Albania under one of their Pashas.

43. Dark, dark day—i.e. the Kossovo defeat, Vidov Dan, 1389. The Serbian peoples, however, including naturally the

Sure I have seen thy woe and all thine ill, 45
 Yet 'gainst the worst I now must set my will!
 When deadly wound is given in the head,
 The quivering frame doth painfully expire.

people of Montenegro, who are an integral part of the Serbian stock, have during the past five hundred and forty years regularly kept the anniversary of Vidov Dan, as if it were the celebration of a signal victory rather than a defeat. By sheer steadfastness of faith and elevation of religious hope the defeat on Kossovo did indeed become—at least in the moral realm—a victory! In the moral sphere nothing could be more significant and beautiful than the closing words of the national ballad, *Propast Carstva Srpskoga* (*The Fall of the Serbian Kingdom*):—

All was done with honour, all was holy,¹
 God's will was seen fulfilled on Kossovo.

[Sve je sveto i čestito bilo,
 I milome Bogu pristupačno.]

A lofty conclusion truly, but it harmonizes with the lofty beginning, where a letter from the Blessed Virgin is brought to Tsar Lazar on Kossovo; and thus speaks the letter to the monarch:—

“Tsar Lazar, thou Prince of noble lineage,
 What wilt thou now choose to be thy kingdom?
 Say, dost thou desire a heavenly kingdom,
 Or dost thou prefer an earthly kingdom?”

.

King Lazar read, and pondered in this manner:—

“If I now should choose an earthly kingdom,
 Lo, an earthly kingdom is but fleeting,
 But God's kingdom shall endure for ever.” . . .

And the Tsar he chose a heavenly kingdom.

¹ For an admirable translation into English of this one of the most often quoted of the Serbian national ballads *vide* “Kossovo: Heroic Songs of the Serbs,” by Helen Rootham, Oxford, B. H. Blackwell, 1920.

Plague of mankind ! May God make end of thee !
 Is half a world so small, to thee so small— 50
 A half-world filled with horror of thy deeds—
 That pois'nous stench from thy demon soul
 Thou now must bring to spue upon our Rock?
 Is it small offering—of Serbia the whole,
 From Danube river to the deep blue sea? 55
 Thy seat thou hast, all wickedly to ride ;
 Thy blood-stained sceptre is thy boast and pride,
 From sacred altar thou insultest God,
 And where was outrag'd Cross dost rear a Mosque!—
 Our very shades and relics would'st defile, 60
 Those relics which to shelter men have brought,
 And screen'd amid the eternal hills,
 Dear shrines reminding of our heroes' deeds?
 These all have been o'erwhelmed in blood,
 A hundred times in thine, ten times ten in ours ! 65
 The work of that accursed monarch see—
 He whom the devil teaches all things bad!—
 "This Montenegro, which I cannot tame,
 "By means or fair or foul shall own my name :
 "With it, on this wise must the method be." 70
 Thus spake the Devil's Sent One ; then began
 Sweets of false faith to proffer unto man.
 The curse of God be on this brood unclean !
 What is the aim of Islam's creed 'mongst us?
 How will ye 'scape from our ancestors' curse? 75
 However dare 'fore Milosh to appear,
 Or how before each other Serbian knight,
 Whose names shall last while ever sun hath light?

53. "Our Rock" : i.e. *Montenegro*, *Crna Gora*, "The Black Rock."

. . . While pondering o'er this council for to-day,
 Hot horror burns within my soul : 80
 Shall brother brother ever thus war down ;
 Shall not such strife so bloody and so long
 Destroy the very seed within the womb !

O cursèd day !—may God blot out thy light—
 That thou didst bring me forth upon the world ! 85
 Last year a hundred times I curs'd the hour
 Those Turks did fail to make an end of me,
 Lest I should falsify my people's hope.

(VUK MIĆUNOVIĆ, *reclining near the VLADIKA, has feigned to be asleep, but has heard everything, and proceeds to arouse the BISHOP to action, jerking the VLADIKA with trenchant sentences from his purely contemplative poise.*)

VUK MIĆUNOVIĆ

If God thou knowest, Bishop, 'tis not so !
 What miseries are these now come on thee, 90
 That thou should'st weep and wail with woman-soul,
 And sink beneath the waves of all our woe?
 Is not to-day a solemn festival,
 A day to counsel take with all thy people,
 That they may rid their land of Islam's yoke? 95

79. "This council for to-day": i.e. the meeting of chieftains to be held to decide how best to deal with the Moslem problem in Montenegro.

86-7. The Bishop had been captured by the Turks a year previously, and with difficulty was his liberation effected—even on a ransom of 3,000 ducats.

Apart from that, our Slava falls to-day,
 When all our noblest youth do gather
 Their strength to test and put to trial their worth,
 Their biceps' power, the fleetness of their feet,
 And with the bow contending skill to show; 100
 Who best can strike the knife through roast ram's
 shoulder;
 To hear also the liturgy at Church,
 And round about the precincts dance the kolo;
 And chests expand in knightly exercise.
 Best incense this to every hero-soul, 105
 Forging in supple youth an iron heart!
 Banish, Bishop, all these black discourses;
 For men should bravely bear while women weep:
 What wailing chief e'er wrought his people's good!
 Thou art not chief without some good support: 110
 See these five hundred agile lads,
 What feats of manly strength and power
 Were on this field displayed to-day!
 Have they not winged the arrow to her mark?
 With what agility they played at grada! 115
 How nimbly all did catch the capitsa!

96. The reference is, of course, to the Whitsuntide Festival, one of the Church *slavas*. For note on *Slava* see page 225.

115. *Grada*: in Montenegro and Herzegovina a game played with a ball usually made of cattle-hair closely compressed, and resembling somewhat the Western schoolboy's game of *rounders*, there being the same aiming at one another with the ball, and the same nimble dodging to escape being hit. Throughout Yugoslavia (and in Czecho-Slovakia too) agile and athletic youths are known as *falcons*.

116. In Montenegro the national game of "grab the cap." A circle having been described upon the ground, half the players

Soon as wolf-cubs around the she-wolf sport,
 Full well they know in roughish gambols how
 Their teeth to sharpen on each other's throat;
 Or when on falcon the first feathers sprout, 120
 Doth he still rest contented in his nest:
 Doth he not pick and peck and pluck at it,
 Pulling at twigs and straws time after time,
 Then, twittering "seeyutchouchee", seeks the sky?
 In all these things a lesson is to find! 125

Beside these youths who now appear before thee,
 Six times as many like them are at home:
 Their strength, Bishop, should be thy strength too.
 Before the Turks have brought such to their knee,
 Sure many a Turkish wife shall wear deep black; 130
 And to this struggle no end shall ever be,
 Until the Turk has disappeared—or we!
 What right has anyone of us to Hope—
 Except in God and in his own right arm!
 Our Hope it was all buried long ago, 135
 In one great grave on Kossovo's broad field.
 When Fortune smiles 'tis easy to be good;
 Adversity is e'er the hero's school!

enter the circle, each on all-fours; those who remain outside the circle then have to try and snatch the cap from their fellows who are on all-fours, and who use their "four-legs" in defending themselves and their caps sometimes with considerable effect.

120. Throughout Yugoslav poetry, the term *falcon* is used for *gymnast*, *athlete*, *hero*; and the "Falcon Clubs" play a great cultural rôle in the S. Slav lands. More than 50,000 persons witnessed the gymnastic display of the Yugoslav "Falcon Clubs" given in Belgrade on 28th of June, 1930.—*Vidov Dan*.

ON LOVTCHEN'S SUMMIT

*(To the probable site of an ancient Pravoslav church on
Loutchen's lofty summit they have carried crosses.
The men are reclining on the mountain summit,
firing their rifles and counting the echoes.)*

SERDAR YANKO DJURASHKOVITCH

What wondrous gun! 'Tis worth a manly head!
Each gun of ours makes half a dozen echoes, 140
But Vuk Tomanovitch—his jeferdar
Brings ever nine times ringing echo!

SERDAR RADONYA

Lend me your ears now, Montenegrins!
Full fifty years I've spun of my life's thread,
And summer on this mount have ever spent, 145
Ascending quite to this commanding peak.
A hundred times I've gaz'd at floating clouds,
Sailing as phantom ships high off the sea,
And casting anchor on this mountain range!
Now here, now there I've watch'd them break
away, 150
With darts of lightning and with rumblings dread—
And sudden roar of all the sky's artillery!
A hundred times have I watch'd from these heights,
And quietly basked beneath the genial sun,
While lightnings flash'd and thunders peal'd
below: 155
I saw and heard how they did rend the skies;

141. Jeferdar: a flint gun of finest Damascus steel.

Downpours from heaven of most hostile hail
Robbed Mother Earth of her fertility.

And now a wonder new comes into view :
Observest thou—if thou thy God dost know!— 160
How much is sea and how much is of shore?
View Bosnia's plains! Herzegovina see!
Albania spreading straight unto the waves!
Seest thou how much is Montenegrin soil?
One single cloud doth surely cover all! 165

All around doth peal the crashing thunder,
Behold beneath us how the lightnings flash,
Alone on us doth smile the cheering sun :
Kindly the air doth greet our faces now—
'Tis wont on Lovtchen to blow somewhat cool! 170

OBRAD

Didst thou mark the wonder and the omen—
How in the sky two flashes made a Cross!

162. The Moslems in Bosnia and Herzegovina are of Southern Slav origin, though there has been not unnaturally some admixture of Turkish blood. When in the year 1463 the once proud Kingdom of Bosnia fell under the domination of the Ottoman Power, a great many of the Bosnians forsook the faith of their fathers and went over to Islam, and remain to this day the devoted adherents of the Prophet. Conscious of their religious affinities with the Ottoman Turks, from whom they took their Faith, the Moslems of Bosnia-Herzegovina like to describe themselves as "Turks" and their faith as the "Turkish Religion". "By my Turkish faith" is a common asseveration, and in serious circumstances one hears expressions such as these: "What has happened—thou? Speak, if thou art true Turk!"—"Stay! Speak truth! if Turk thou art!" The real Turk, i.e. of the Ottoman race, is designated by a special word *Turkusche*, in order to distinguish him from the Moslem of Slav blood.

One flash there was from Kom straight on to Lovtchen;
From Scutari another—unto Ostrog!

They made a cross of living fire; 175
Most beautiful indeed to view;

Never before in this wide world
Was like unto it seen or even heard,
God help us Serbs in all our misery,
And let this Cross be unto us good omen! 180

VUK RASLAPCHEVITCH

Say, Drashko, say! Whereat dost point thy jeferdar?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Tempted am I to shoot a little cuckoo,
But rather grudge to spend on it the bullet!

VUK RASLAPCHEVITCH

Save it, then, Drashko! Let life more precious be!
From shooting cuckoos there can come no good; 185
Dost thou not know—if the Devil hath not thee?—
That cuckoos are the daughters of Tsar Lazar?

*(Much shouting is heard near the ruins on the hill-top
on the north side, above the Lake.)*

173. Kom: a mountain in eastern Montenegro.

174. Ostrog: another mountain, at the foot of which is a monastery; south-east of Nikšić.

187. The Montenegrins with a lively fancy tell the traveller that "cuckoos are the daughters of Tsar Lazar". The Occidental

SERDAR VUKOTA

What cause for this ado? Why uproar thus?
Such babbling were a shame to any children!

VUKOTA MRVALYEVITCH

A flight of partridges upon us came, 190
And every bird of them we took alive :
On which account this uproar great amongst us !
(*More shouting.*)

Let these birds go ; I swear it is God's will !
For 'twas distress that brought them here ;
How could ye captive make of one of them, 195
Since they do fly to you for kindly care,

laughs and the Montenegrin looks surprised, for he meant the remark quite seriously, since cuckoos may have two associations in the Yugoslav mind; associations sometimes quite distinct, sometimes bound together, namely, *cowardice* and *lamentation*. In daily speech all over Yugoslavia the word *kukavica* stands both for "cuckoo" and for "coward", according to context; while the verb taken from the noun, viz. *kukati*, means to *bewail*, or, in a pejorative sense, to *yammer*. The Montenegrins—and of course the Serbians generally—tell one how, after the tragedy of Kossovo, the daughters of King Lazar were transformed into cuckoos (*kukavice*) to bewail (*kukati*) the fall of their royal father. King Lazar had five daughters: Mara, wife of Vuk Brankovitch; a second, said by some to have been named Despina, who married into the family of the Bulgarian Tsar Shishman; Jelena (Yelena), or *Helen*, the wife of George Stratzimirovitch Balshitch, later wife of Sandaly Hranitch; a fourth, whose name is unknown, wife of Nikola Garevitch; and a fifth, Olivera, who became the wife of Bayazit (or *Bayazed*) I, as a guarantee of peace between Serb and Turk. Reading between the lines, one can appreciate the poetical fancy which describes these daughters of Tsar Lazar as having been transformed into *cuckoos*!

'Tis not God's will that ye should them all kill!

(They let the birds fly off, and the young men return to the crosses, with the aid of which they had caught the birds.)

AN ASSEMBLY AT CETINJE ON THE 8TH SEPTEMBER,
on the occasion of the FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITY
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

(Some disputes are to be settled. The PEOPLE dance the Kolo; the CHIEFS go aside.)

The PEOPLE, as they dance the Kolo,¹ sing:

Our God hath poured His wrath upon the Serbs,
For deadly sins withdrawn His favour from us:

198-9. On Kossovo Day, 1929, the present writer happened to be at Zavidovitch in Bosnia. He found services being held consecutively in the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Jewish synagogue, and the Serbian or *Pravoslav* Church. All the leading people in the little town on the pretty river Bosna, famous for its woodcutting industry, seemed to make an honest effort to attend each and all of the services—a courteous recognition of those with whom one does not think

¹ The root meaning of the word *kolo* is a *wheel* or *circle*, and it is the word used all over Southern Slav lands for the national dance in which both men and women join, taking hold of hands; the number of dancers increasing and the circle extending as the dance proceeds. Even in the remotest hamlets the dancing of the kolo is the best-loved form of recreation. Groups of village children, between seven and fourteen years of age, boys and girls together, hand in hand, may be seen dancing the kolo with complete abandon and lack of self-consciousness, singing their own songs and emphasizing time and rhythm. The annual Court Ball is always opened with the kolo, the dance being led by the King and Queen. Cf. Greek χορός, *dance, chorus*.

Our Rulers trampled underfoot all law, 200
 With bloody hatred fought each other down,

alike upon all points, and this attitude of mind seemed to be general throughout the day.

In the Pravoslav Church the first words of the priest were a quotation from *The Mountain Wreath*, lines 198-9:—

“Our God hath poured His anger on the Serbs,
 For mortal sins withdrawn His favour from us.”

So sings the Kolo in *Gorski Vijenac*.

“Days of triumph”, said the priest, “are more readily forgotten, or pass more easily out of mind, than days of disaster and defeat. All the brilliant victories of Napoleon are not so deeply rooted in French recollection as is the one defeat of Sedan. The Russians have forgotten many of their great victories, but the day of their defeat at *Tsushimi* has gone into their National Calendar for ever. The Jews still celebrate the Fall of Jerusalem, while the victories of Saul and of David have receded into the mists of the past. And so with us Serbs: who of us to-day thinks of celebrating the victories of *Mishar* or of *Plotchnik* or of *Vut-cheeyee Dol*? Many of us do not even recognize them when mentioned, but every child amongst us knows of Kossovo, the great day of defeat and ruin. Vidov Dan has been immortalized in our faith and art and literature. Through whole centuries, from year to year, the Church of our fathers has dedicated this day to special worship and reflection. Painters and sculptors have been inspired not less than poets by that great national tragedy which we call simply Kossovo. The bones of our warriors, martyrs, saints, and heroes are sown broadcast over all our land. They lie at the foundations of our national temples and shrines. A thousand times precious be their memory. Let us honour them by living in brotherly love! To all our fallen saints and heroes eternal honour, Amen.”

201. Nemanja (1169-96), in order to unite all the Serbian countries, fought with his elder brothers. His son, Stephen the First Crowned, had to contend with his younger brother, Vukan, who robbed him of most of his power. But St. Sava reconciled the warring brothers. The son of Stephen the First Crowned

Tore from fraternal brows the living eyes ;
 Authority and Law they cast aside,
 Instead chose folly as their rule and guide !
 And those who served our kings became untrue, 205
 Crimson they bathed themselves in kingly blood !
 Our noblemen—God's curse be on their souls—
 Did tear and rend the Kingdom into pieces,
 And wasted wantonly our people's power.
 The Serbian magnates—may their name rot
 out!— 210

(circa 1234) was banished by his brother Vladislav, while the third son, the successor of Vladislav, was banished in the year 1276 by his son Dragutin. Dragutin very probably gave his crown in 1281, much against his will, to his brother Milutin. In the year 1310 the illegitimate son of Milutin, Stephen Detchansky, rebelled with the object of dethroning his father, but the son was conquered, and punished with blinding; a hot iron being held before his eyes—which, however, was not so successfully done as the operators supposed, since he later regained his sight. This same Stephen Detchansky became king, and in his turn had to fight first with his cousin, Vladislav, the son of Dragutin, whom he defeated in 1324; and afterwards with his son Dushan the Mighty, in which struggle the father was conquered and is said to have suffered death by suffocation.

203-4. Foolish in richly endowing many monasteries and churches, and yet not governing justly.

205. The presence of Greek favourites at the Serbian Court annoyed the Serbian aristocracy. The Greek princesses whom they brought married the Serbian kings. For instance, Detchansky was incited to revolt against Milutin, and afterwards Dushan rebelled against Detchansky, because both Milutin and Detchansky, as elderly men, married a second time—with Greek princesses younger than the sons. The poet may also have in mind the nobility in the time of Tsar Urosh (1355-71) who repudiated their vassalage, and sought to be independent rulers in their own districts.

They scatter'd broadcast Discord's evil seed,
 And poisoned thus the life-springs of our race.
 Our Serbian chiefs, most miserable cowards,
 The Serbian stock did heartlessly betray.

Accursèd be Kossóvo's Evening Meal; 215
 Far better had it been if from that hour
 Our magnates all had disappear'd for aye!
 If only Miloš still remain'd unto us,
 With his two valiant Pòbratims,

211. Not only were the nobility at strife amongst themselves, but some united with the Hungarians against King Vukashin and defeated him. Left to struggle unaided with the Turks, Vukashin was killed in 1371. Discord was at its height after the death of Urosh.

215. The tradition is that Tsar Lazar drank a toast to Milosh Obilitch on the eve of the Battle of Kossovo, calling him a traitor, incited by the denunciations of Vuk Brankovitch—who, however, was himself the real traitor, and went over to the Turks with 40,000 cavalry.

219. Milosh Obilitch went to the Turkish camp with two of his pobratims, Milan Toplitsa and Ivan Kosanchitch.

Pobratim: At the present day in Serbia—and indeed all over Serbian-speaking lands—there are two kinds of sworn friendship, viz. pobratimstvo (i.e. brothership) or posestrimstvo (i.e. sistership). (1) That between intimate friends, who conclude a brotherly compact, sometimes immediately on first sight, acting upon first impressions and intuitions. The question is put, "Will you be my brother?" The attraction being mutual, the ceremony, which is very simple, is performed. Each pricks his right wrist, and the blood flowing is absorbed on a piece of bread, the pieces then being exchanged and eaten. Like Orestes and Pilades, they are then sworn friends unto death, the families being counted as one; there can, for instance, be no intermarriage, the families being regarded as of the first degree of affinity. (2) That between a sick person and another, known or unknown, and generally seen in a dream. The sick person, probably fearing death, dreams about another person; he or she sees this person in a dream, and has the impression that the person so seen will aid recovery.

Then Serb would be with Serb to-day. 220
 Thou Branković, of stock despicable,
 Should one serve so his Fatherland,
 Thus much is Honesty esteem'd?
 Who, Miloš, would not envy thee?
 A victim thou to thine own truth and worth! 225
 All-puissant spirit in the things of War;
 A thunder mighty which did shatter thrones!
 The deeds thy knightly soul hath wrought,
 Outshine all lustre of the Past,—
 The fame of Sparta and of mighty Rome! 230
 Their valiant and heroic feats
 Are all surpass'd by thy proud arm.

This person is therefore summoned, and in the presence of the priest, who says some prayers and blesses the little crosses (of silver or wood) which are to be placed upon the sick person, takes the oath of *pobratimstvo*, or *posestrimstvo*, as the case may be, the pact being as binding and carrying the same consequences as in the first case. Frequent allusion to all the implicates of *pobratimstvo* are to be found in Serbian fairy-tales as well as in the national songs.

It should be added that a *pobratim* of the former kind need not be of the same race or even religion as his "brother"; e.g. *Kraljevitch Marko* has indeed a *vila* (or fairy) as *posestrima*—*Vila Raviolya* she was called.

221. How was it that the Turks gained so crushing a victory on Kossovo—when the Serbian power was at its zenith? National tradition gives as explanation the treachery of *Vuk Brankovitch* (*vide supra*).

232. "Thy proud arm": In the introduction to *South Slav Monuments* (page 25)—edited by Professor Michael J. Pupin, Ph.D., Hon. D.Sc., etc., Professor of Columbia University and President of the New York Academy of Science, and furnished with a charming essay on Serbian Church Architecture by Sir Thomas Jackson, Bart., London, John Murray, 1918—there appears the following passage: "How the people were impressed by these royal monu-

Where is Leonidas, where Scaevola,
 When Obilić doth enter the arena?
 That arm of thine with but one only stroke 235
 Brought down a throne and made all Hell to quake!

ments is best seen in their songs and epics. In one of them the people speak through their beloved Voivoda Miloš Obilitch, who was in Dalmatia as an Envoy of Tsar Lazar amongst the Roman Catholics, who boasted of their beautiful church of St. Dimitri. He answered:—

Gentlemen, not thus greatly would ye boast,
 If ye had seen our own white marble churches,
 Foundations of our glorious kings and nobles,
 How great and lofty they uprear themselves.
 What is this small Saint Demeter of yours!
 Clean o'er its spire could I now throw my golden mace.

And he did."

233. Leonidas, King of Sparta, who, 480 B.C., perished at Thermopylae heroically defending the Pass against the Persians. Caius Mucius Scaevola (408 B.C.) wished to kill Porcena, the Etrurian King, who besieged Rome, but he killed one of his secretaries instead. On being taken, Scaevola, to show his disregard of death and suffering, plunged his right hand into the fire and held it there. Porcena was so impressed that he concluded peace with the Romans, and to Mucius was given the honourable name of Scaevola, i.e. Left-handed.

235-6. That Milosh really killed Sultan Murat, on Kossovo Field, in 1389, is verified by the letter of Bayazit which accompanied the corpse of his father to Brussa in Asia Minor. In this letter Milosh Obilitch is called "the faithful servant of Lazar, Milosh *Kobilitch*" (not Obilitch); as he is sometimes called in Serbia also Kobilovitch, i.e. Mare's Son, or nourished on mare's milk, in order to get strong. Milosh was of humble origin. Prince Lazar came across him while hunting; saw the boy sleeping under a tree, the branches above him as he breathed rising and falling with the heaving of his chest. King Lazar watched until the boy awoke, arose, and went to a hut. The King followed, and was still more astonished when he saw the boy take breast-milk from

Yet Miloš fell, most marvellous of knights,
 A victim fell unto the world's great Scourge.
 In proud repose the puissant Leader lies :
 There from his veins did spurt his noble blood, 240
 Where he so proudly trod a while before,
 His breast possess'd by one sole dread intent,
 As he did press his way through Asia's hordes,
 He swallow'd them with his great eyes of fire
 Where he so proudly trod a while before, 245
 Seeking his hallow'd tomb and life immortal,
 Scorning alike the failures of small men,
 And all that false and senseless company.

Our God hath pour'd His wrath upon the Serbs !
 A seven-headed monster He sent forth 250
 To plague and extirpate the Serbian Name,
 Be they betrayers or be they betray'd.
 On falling ruins of a realm heroic
 Did Miloš shine with firm and constant justice ;
 Crownèd be too, with an undying glory, 255
 Those pòbratims who steadfast were to Miloš ;
 Not less the lovely Jugovitch bouquet !

his mother while she was bread-making—though he must have been then ten or twelve years of age ! In Serbian lands in olden times it was not unusual for a boy to be given breast-milk up to the age of nine, and there is a saying : "This is a hero ; he must have had nine years' mother's milk." Lazar took the lad to be his page.

250. See note on Turks, line 1.

252. Milosh was killed on Kossovo, and Vuk Brankovitch, according to tradition, was poisoned by Bayazit in order to prevent his defection (1398). His dominions on Kossovo were taken by Despot Stephen, the son of Tsar Lazar. That is an historical fact.

So passed the Serbian Cap and Name away :
 Warrior lions gave place to ploughmen,
 While selfish poltroons took Mohammed's creed,— 260
 Their Serbian milk shall ever bring them plague !

All those who 'scaped from death by Moslem sword,
 All those who still held true to Christian faith,
 Who with abhorrence thought of bonds and chains,
 All such as these took flight to mountains grey, 265
 To wane and perish and pour out their blood ;
 'Mid mountains, trust and heritage to guard,
 Our sacred Freedom and our glorious Name.

258. *Serbian cap*: not less characteristic and significant than the *fez* of the Turk, as everyone who has visited Montenegro, Dalmatia or the Croatian uplands round the Velebit mountains can testify.

268. "When one compares the influences of the Roman, Serbian, and Turkish rules over this part of Europe, one cannot but be struck by the few monuments of constructive genius that mark the Roman and Turkish occupation, whereas over one hundred monasteries and numbers of churches tell of Serbian religious activity, which of course meant social and intellectual activity, belonging to the time when the country was governed by its own people.

"At first the architecture was inspired chiefly by Byzantine models, then by Roman, later again by Byzantine; but these models were modified in a way that shows the original genius of the Slav, more especially in the latest period before the fall. This original tendency is common in both Serbia proper and Dalmatia, which developed politically upon somewhat different lines. Meshtrovitch, the young Yugoslav sculptor of Dalmatia, in a recent letter writes: 'Many of the churches in Dalmatia at the period of independent architecture are in Byzantine style, just as there are monasteries in old Serbia in the Roman style . . . but in both there is in addition a true and original Slav spirit. In Dalmatia we had great artists . . . they learned from the Italians and from those from whom the Italians in their turn learned; what is original in their work is Slav.' The Jugo-

Thereto our leaders Providence hath called,
 Our Serbian Youth as radiant as the stars, 270
 The children of these mountains wild,
 In bloody combats falling day by day,
 For sake of Honour, Faith, and Freedom dear;
 Yet all our tears are wiped away
 When skilful gouslar comes with rousing lay. 275

slavs had a love of all that was highly decorative, and we know that St. Sava journeyed far and wide in Asia Minor in search of ornaments, and also of relics, with which to make the Serbian churches an object of pilgrimage."—*Serbia*, by L. F. Waring, p. 47, published by Williams & Norgate, London.

275. "When the night of Turkish rule came, as a literary nation Serbia became practically extinct. It is true that Montenegro imported a printing-press not long after Caxton began his work at Westminster. It was destroyed by the Turks. So were all the other printing-presses that had been smuggled into Serbia. But the spirit of the nation expressed itself in a swan-song of remarkable beauty, and the folk literature that came into existence on the lips of the people, and had its origin, not in 'the heads of few, but in the hearts of all', is one of the most remarkable things of its kind in Europe. The peasant went on telling his stories of bygone glory to the accompaniment of the gouslé; and it is characteristic of the race that it was not Dushan, the conqueror, that was their favourite hero, but Marko, the rejected, the king's son who ended his days in obscurity, his love of truth having, according to legend, cost his father the throne of Serbia. They loved to tell how Marko's mother impressed upon him at the turning-point of his life that he must not tell a lie for anybody, not even for his father; that it was better to lose one's head than sin against one's soul. Nowhere perhaps is the fundamental teaching of Christianity, that the wrong lies in the spirit, whether or not translated into deeds, more picturesquely expressed than in mystic words that Vukashin hears after his frenzy of anger against his son: 'You have not wounded your son Marko; you have wounded the angel of God!' It records the high-water mark in the popular literary expression of a nation."—*Serbia*,

Oh, let our losses all be light,
 If the hard mountains of our land
 Become the grave of Moslem might!
 Lo! what the cause, that long time now,
 Our homeland hills have silent grown, 280
 No longer echoing to heroic shout?
 Our idling armour is consum'd by rust,
 And without chieftains is our country left,
 Our hillsides reek with tramp of Moslem feet.—
 In the same fold behold both wolves and sheep! 285
 United now the Turk with Montenegrin,
 The hodja calls upon Cetinje's plain;
 The artful Turk hath run the lion to cage;
 The Montenegrin Name is underground,
 The Cross with fingers three is no more found! 290

VOIVODA MILIYA

The Kolo ye have heard; how they have sung,
 And all that has been set forth in their song?
 Of the whole nation there ye hear the wisdom!
 Good reason sure have these our countrymen
 To hurl upon us, while they curse, a heap of stones: 295

by L. F. Waring, pp. 150, 151, published by Williams & Norgate, London.

287. The hodja, or muezzin, is said to shout upon Cettigné's plain because the tribe of Checklitche were all, or nearly all, Mussulmans. See note on lines 2598-2615.

290. The "cross with fingers three" is, of course, a reference to the Greek Orthodox manner of making the sign of the cross—with the thumb and two first fingers. Arising from this the Turks had a saying, "May God never let the three-finger cross be united!"

295. In Eastern countries it was customary to put to death

We dare not any high emprise begin,
 To fire our folk to deeds of note and valour ;
 To joyful make our fathers' sacred bones,
 Until they live and sport upon their graves—
 Woe unto us ! We only quack like geese ! 300
 Hew down the Devil ! Leave of him no trace !
 Or ye shall forfeit this world and not less the Next !

VOIVODA STANKO

Thou givest reason sound, good Voivoda !
 Of our lov'd race may God remove all trace,
 If we should live in cowardice and disgrace ! 305
 What will this Dragon in our Christian land ?
 Why nourish we a snake within our breast !
 What "brothers" these?—'tis God alone can tell !—
 Who mock and scorn our very honour,
 And openly insult the Cross rever'd ! 310

SERDAR IVAN

What now may be ! that they have not yet come,
 The OZRINITZI—they who dwell by us ?
 For without them our parleys sure will fail :
 In multitude of counsellors wisdom lies !

VOIVODA MILIYA

They all set out to meet some Turks, 315

by stoning persons against whom accusation was brought by the people.

305. The literal Serbian is : "When we should live under a woman's head-covering".

312. The OZRINITZI were a Montenegrin tribe living to the north of Cettigné, on the southern boundary of Herzegovina.

That they might make exchange of prisoners,
 But envoy have I sent to them,
 That on returning they may hasten here.
 Let them speed on, so waste we not the day;
 For this our business brooketh no delay! 320
(The OZRINITZI arrive.)

VUK TOMANOVITCH

By what misfortune are ye come so late?
 Brothers, we famish, waiting here for you;
 No longer have we food within our wallets,
 Nor yet tobacco in our pouches;
 My neck is all awry through peering after you— 325
 Gazing far o'er the fields of you to catch some view.

SERDAR VOUKOTA

With haste came we, that we might quicker come!
 By no means whatsoe'er more early were we done;
 The Petzirèpè and the old Baleta—
 Some twenty, thirty comrades have collected, 330
 And hid in ambuscade by Douga.
 There to wait a caravan from Nikshitch,
 And stoutly fight the Turks upon the road.
 Heads of Turks fourteen have they cut off,
 And seventy horses taken from them too; 335

320. I.e. the situation between the Turks and Montenegrins was very critical.

331. Douga is a mountain and defile between Gatsko and Nikshitch.

332. Nikshitch is a town and a district which, until 1878, was in Herzegovina; since then it has been in Montenegro.

Of women they have taken two or three!
 Moreover, came to us dispatch from Nikshitch,
 Wherein were offers ten of pobratimstvo,
 Request that we should meet at Poliana,
 And render to them hostages for ransom; 340
 So with these Turks in conference we sate,—
 Good reason that, why we're a little late!

KNEZ BAIKO

How spake Hamza and the Turks of Nikshitch?
 Our word of honour, was it good to them,
 That they should climb to Roudiné in peace? 345

SERDAR VOUKOTA

Thou knowest, Baiko, it so might have been;
 Who from good things doth flee away?
 And how should not the Turks wish goodly things,
 And space to spread their flocks wide out in peace?

KNEZ ROGAN

Perchance there were some words between you 350
 Concerning prisoners—or some other thing?

338. See note above on ceremony of pobratimstvo, line 221.

339. Poliana, called also "white Poliana", a spacious and pretty meadow on the south of Nikshitch, between Nikshitch and Ozrinitch.

343. "Hamza" is a Turkish word meaning an official head or chief of a town; see also lines 370-1.

345. Roudiné is a mountainous district around Nikshitch field.

KNEZ YANKO

Rogan, 'tis true that there was roughish speech!
 Dost thou not know these Turks of Nikshitch?
 A little more, and Death had all in reach!
 Then, down the ages had men told the story 355
 Of our affray and how it had been gory!

VUK MARTINOVITCH

How came about this little quarrel?
 Who first with ill-will clouded the assembly?

KNEZ YANKO

It was but as in joke that things began:
 Muk Manduchitch and Vuk Mitchunovitch 360
 With Captain Hamza first fell on
 To talk on things relating to religion;
 Their speech did then all of a sudden thicken,
 And one affront received another back.
 Unto Mitchunovitch the Captain said: 365
 "Thou Vlach! Better am I than thou! Dost hear?
 Know'st not that better is my faith than thine!
 I mount my steed and gird me with sharp sword,
 And I am captain, too, of royal town;
 Three hundred years my line has govern'd there, 370
 At the sword point my grandsire did it gain,
 When so were fix'd the destinies of States;
 To me to rule it cometh down by right."
 Then Vuk Mitchunovitch up straightway fir'd,

366. *Thou Vlach!*—a scornful form of address.

And Hamza thus address'd as he drew near:— 375
 "Villein am I? thou hog and renegade!
 Is traitor better then than knight?
 How canst thou talk of 'sword' and 'Kossovo'?
 Were we not there together on that day?
 I wrestled then, and still I wrestle now, 380
 But thou hast ever traitor been, both first and last;
 Thyself hast thou dishonour'd 'fore the world;
 Thou hast denied the faith of all thy fathers;
 And hast enslaved thyself to strangers!
 Why boast then of thy town, or of thy lordship? 385
 All Turkish towns that neighb'ring are to us,
 Have I not girdled them with marble tombs?
 So that for men no longer are they towns,
 But rather prisons for unhappy captives!
 I am a scourge of God, for thee prepar'd, 390
 To bring to mind the evil thou hast wrought!"

MANY VOICES

Mitchunovitch! he acts as well as talks!
 Serbian mother ne'er hath borne his like
 Since Kossovo—nor yet, I trow, before it!

KNEZ YANKO

Methinks I have not nicely told 395
 The reason why we almost came to blows:
 Vuk and the Captain we did seek to soothe;
 But well ye know how youths of Ozrinitch,
 Where'er they come, how much they like a joke!
 By fortune ill, there came unto this meeting 400

The aged hodja Brountchevitch,
 Having his little carabine,—
 Which scarce might be a cubit long :
 He slung the weapon on his shoulder,
 And then he wander'd as he willed 405
 Across the fields like all the rest.
 One of our youths then from us slipped away,
 Went sidling up unto the hodja,
 Sticking a horn full cubit long
 Into the barrel of his gun ! 410
 O my goodness ! our three hundred fellows
 Did split their very sides with laughter ;
 The hodja wonder'd as he walked
 What had befallen all these people,
 Till in his carabine he spied the horn. 415
 Then on a sudden clouds did gather black :
 Out from our rifles living fire was pour'd :
 Fifteen stretchers quickly were prepar'd,
 Stretchers six for ours, nine for men of theirs !

BOGDAN DJURASHKOVITCH

Sure time it is we counsel took together ; 420
 Time it is we did resolve on something ;
 Our business is on all hands talked of ;
 When some inkling get the Unbelievers
 They will not fritter time away as we !

SERDAR RADOGNA

Each one is here who needs must be with us, 425

Saving the five Martinovitch ;
To whom has come, I doubt not, some mischance ;
But lacking them, sure nothing can be done !

KNEZ BAIKO

Come, my comrades, let us get to business,
Or else let each away to his own house, 430
Lest we should be a laughing-stock for children ;
Now, with the Turks, let each do how he may,
I myself shall know, should one fall in my hand !—
Yet here are we no better than those mice,
Who thought to take a bell and hang it on the cat ! 435
(*The MARTINOVITCH arrive.*)

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

At last you come, and sure we've waited for you !
Here now, comrades, are we now all gather'd,
Like tipsy wedding guests of which the story tells ;
This is on you most certainly some shame,
Since all of you have shortest way to come ! 440

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH

O Vuk, reproach us not, nor you, my brothers !

426. "The five Martinovitch" : the five sons of Martin Bayitsa, from the village of Bayitsé, on the field of Cettigné.

435. A Serbian fable tells how the mice decided to put a bell upon the neck of the cat, in order to be warned of its coming, but no one of them was brave enough to carry it into execution !

438. I.e. the Serbian story of the wedding guests who drank too much and forgot their duties, failing to bring the bride to the house of the bridegroom, as according to Serbian custom it was their duty to do. It is customary to choose a bride some distance from one's native village.

We were already long time with you here,
Had fortune ill not met us on our way;
Therein the reason of our brief delay!

KNEZ ROGAN

Wine sure has stirr'd the guests to quarrel! 445
Holds not your patron saint his feast to-day?

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH

There was no quarrel 'mong our guests;
A wife of ours was captur'd by the Turks!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Some joke of thine?—what wife?
Prithee now tell us what the day has brought! 450
Have no concern; we lend to thee our ears,
For tales like these all ears have ever caught!

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH

The story I will tell—a very devil's venture:
Our guests and we danced merrily the kolo,
And passed all round the bowl of ruby wine, 455
When suddenly, high up from Pishté stream,
A rifle-shot cracked forth, and someone cried:
“Where now some knight! Where now some hero bold!

446. “Holds not your patron saint his feast to-day?” The reference is to the Serbian *slava*, or festival of a certain saint or patron, under whose protection the tribe is supposed to have become Christian. The actual feast alluded to is the Feast of the Nativity, September 8th.

Our Montenegrins are led off for slaves."
 No serious thought gave we, and little heed we
 paid: 460
 "For slaves", forsooth!—in very heart of Montenegro!
 He's drunk, said we, and thinks he sings!
 Then sure two shots, one sharp upon the other:
 "Tzeek! tzeek"—the sounds attacked our ears;
 While, as before, the man did shout. 465

A serious something sure is in the air:
 We seized our guns, and started off to run;
 Gaining the spot, thou hast a sight to see:
 Mouyo Alitch, of Turkish guards the chief,
 Has run away with Rose, the wife of Kasan, 470
 And with him taken, too, her youngest brother;
 And now, behold, full year it is and more,
 Since they did put their heads together,
 Yet who on earth had ever dreamt
 A Serbian girl could marry with a Turk? 475

KNEZ ROGAN

What woman does is ever smiling wonder;
 In creeds she bothers not of "which" and "what";
 A hundred times she'd change her faith,
 So she might have the longing of her heart.

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH

I have not spoken to you all my mind: 480
 Eternal woe unto that soul
 Which did bring such fate on Rose!—
 Which such a rose did give to Kasan,

Shutting a fairy in a very prison ;
 This Kasan is a good-for-nothing. 485
 And listen well, ye Montenegrins !
 Might all my stock be blotted out,
 Had any Serb run off with her,
 And I had simply glanc'd to see—
 Howe'er painful 'twere to me ! 490
 But when I heard she'd gone with Turks,
 No time was there for vain reflection,
 Full after them in chase we straight did go,
 By Simounya did find the nuptial party,
 And killed the brothers Alitch on the spot, 495
 But, fell mischance ! among the Turks the bride !
 So horribly our reputation's blacken'd,
 Henceforth from God we wait no grace or favour.

KNEZ YANKO

O dear my Lord ! What mighty fruit of counsel !
 Children sure have done this business? 500
 What we would dare, we dare not do ;
 We have no stomach for our resolutions ;
 Mere thoughts we load upon our neck,
 As if to think were all our business,
 And it matter'd not to act ! 505

494. Simounya : a mountain.

498. They could expect no favour from God, for among the Montenegrins the greatest shame and the worst crime is to kill a woman.

501-2. What they have in mind is to rid the land of the Turks ; it is in everybody's thoughts, but no one dares to discuss the subject.

Whene'er I have o'ermuch debated,
 My deeds have ever lagged behind;
 He who says always "Not to-day!" will never, never
 find a way!

(VLADIKA DANILO, *seeing that all are gathered, comes
 amongst them.*)

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Hold us not back on this wise, Bishop,
 Send rather all this crowd away; 510
 Each looks to hear what thou wilt say,
 But thou art tangled much in blackish thoughts:
 Nor dost thou summon nor dismiss us;
 Black as the earth thy brow hath come to be,
 Alone thou walkest out, without companion; 515
 Thou dost not eat nor canst thou fall asleep;
 Thou turnest o'er great thoughts within thy mind;
 Thy crowding dreams are ever of the Turk,
 But I grow numb with over-long reflection!

BISHOP DANILO

Now, listen, Vuk, and ye my other brethren! 520
 At what ye see in me ye should not wonder;—
 That I so tortured am by blackish thoughts,
 That things of horror heave within my mind;
 Who on the mountain height doth take his stand,
 Sees more than he who stays upon the plain. 525
 Some things I see more clearly than do ye;
 At times this bringeth joy, at times but misery:—

526-7. The Vladika, or Prince-Bishop, is in a position to
 foresee events more clearly than his fellow-countrymen. He sees

I fear them not, this Devil's spawn,
 Though they be thick as autumn leaves,
 But I have fear of ills at home! 530
 Our kinsmen wild have own'd Mahomet's Name;
 And if the renegades we should attack,
 Their Serbian kindred never would desert them;
 Our land would be o'erwhelm'd in tribal strife,
 And there would rule red carnage and great gore. 535
 Satan doth come unto satanic wedding,
 To quench in blackness all our Serbian light;
 Our ills we bear lest worse on us should come.
 The drowning man will catch at any straw,
 His hands expose if he may shield his head! 540

KNEZ RADÉ (*brother of VLADIKA DANILO*)

Why blacken hands, if not to strike the anvil?

that the renegade Montenegrins who have gone over to the Moslem faith may be defeated—good fortune for the land; but it is also possible that the contrary may happen, in which case he would regret that there had been undue haste. In any case, he feels that the responsibility rests upon him. Hence his mingled feelings.

528. "This Devil's spawn", i.e. the original Turkish stock, outside Montenegro, as distinct from renegade Montenegrins.

534. This tribal strife would be of the most intense character, because in the same tribe there were both Christians and Moslems.

536. Turks will come in from outside Montenegro to help the renegades at home, and the Devil will rejoice.

540. There is a sudden change of metaphor from the preceding line, where the picture is that of a drowning man. Here the man is threatened with a blow directed at his head, to protect which he exposes his arm. In the desperate defence of the Defile of Kaimakchalan, in the autumn of 1915, many a Serbian saved his head by receiving the bayonet thrust upon his forearm.

541. Once begun, the work must be done. The Serbians say: "Do your forging, or do not black your trousers."

Why call assembly, if thou fear'st to speak?
 Last year thou scarce escap'd a hanging;
 God grant thee still to swing on Turkish hook!
 Something thou mournest, yet thou know'st not
 what; 545
 Warrest with Turks, yet treatest them as friend,
 And showest thus thy love to thine own folk!
 But err thou not, nor e'er be thou deceiv'd:
 If thou into their hands shouldst ever fall,
 They would upon the instant take thy head; 550
 Or, holding thee in life, would bind thee fast,
 And make great sport in torturing thee!
 Raven plucks not eye from raven,
 And Turk is ever brother unto Turk;
 Strike while thou hast arm to strike, 555
 And tears shed not in empty lamentation.
 Upon the Devil's road have all set out,
 Our land is foul—reeks of this False Religion!

VOIVODA BATRITCH (*to* KNEZ RADÉ)

Some right hast thou, though not unmixed with
 wrong!
 What thou hast said could have been friendlier
 said, 560

543. See the note on lines 86-7.

546. The brother of the Vladika complains that he is too mild towards the renegade Montenegrins: he fights against the Turks proper, but is friendly towards those who were really worse enemies. There is a Serbian saying: "The Turk by conversion is worse than the born Turk."

553. A proverbial expression: "Raven from raven plucketh not the eye."

So not to make his wounds to burn,
And gall him with an alien arrow!

(All are silent; scarcely dare they breathe.)

*A clear, moonlight night. They sit around the fire. THE
KOLO sings upon the big threshing-floor.¹*

THE KOLO

None yet e'er drank a honey'd draught
Unmixed with cup of bitter gall,
And cup of gall for honey equally doth call, 565
That so, the mixture one may easier drink.

Beg Ivan-beg of ancestry heroic,
Like tawny lion fought against the Turks,
On every side, and deep in gory woods :
Half of his lands the Turks did take from him, 570

567. Ivan-beg (1466-90), the son of Stephen Tsrnoyevitch, the first ruler of Zeta—a large area comprising some parts of modern Montenegro. His father was the founder of the Tsrnoyevitch dynasty. Ivan-beg himself fought unceasingly against the Turks, being generally in alliance with the Venetians, as in 1474 and again in 1478, when he assisted the Venetians to defend Scutari against them.

570. In the year 1479 the Venetians gave Scutari to the Turks, and Ivan-beg was left in the lurch. In 1485 the Turks conquered his stronghold of Zablyak—his capital—as well as all the plain of Zeta, driving Ivan-beg into the heart of the mountain fastnesses, where he entrenched himself with his faithful followers.

¹ In all the Serbian lands the threshing-floor is always to be found in the open, never under a roof. Sometimes one whole neighbourhood uses the same threshing-floor. The wheat is trodden from the ear by horses. The threshing-floor serves also as a rendezvous for the Kolo-dancers on Sunday afternoons and other holidays.

The country delug'd was with blood,
 These Moslems slew his doughty brother,—
 Ferocious dragon, Urosh Voivoda!—
 On the broad fields of Tchémovo.
 Ivan his only brother mourn'd, 575
 Mourn'd him more,—the Voivoda Urosh,—
 Than were he mourning both his sons;
 Mourn'd him more, the Voivoda Urosh,
 Than he could mourn a whole lost land;
 Mourn'd him more, the Voivoda Urosh, 580
 Than he could mourn the loss of both his eyes;
 Not dearer they to him than brother Urosh.
 Full many a time and oft the hero may
 Excite high heaven unto mighty laughter!
 Ivan with cup on high vow'd direful vengeance, 585
 Drinking the toast with consecrated wine.
 He lets his white hair fall upon his shoulders,
 His white beard curling down unto his waist;
 With his old hands he grasps his sword and lance;
 Blood-sprinkled both his weapons and his arms, 590
 At every step he fells a Turkish foe;
 The old man bounds as were he nimble youth!
 O dear my Lord, it sure must be a dream,
 That on this wise an aged man can leap!

573. The brother of Ivan-beg was called George rather than Urosh, and he was killed in 1415, in a fight with the Turks.

574. The field of Tchémovo is in Zeta, between the river Tsiyevna and Podgoritsa.

577. His two sons were (1) George, ruler of Montenegro, after the death of his father until 1496, when he was obliged to flee to Venice, whence he had gained his wife; (2) Stanisha, see note on line 694.

Good fortune past returns to him again : 595
 At Karoutché upon Tsrnmitsa's boundary,
 Of a whole band of fifteen thousand Turks,
 Not one of them escap'd alive ;
 Their marble tombs, which men still see,
 Attest the glory of Prince Tsrnoyèvitch : 600
 God grant mercy to the soul of Urosh,
 Wondrous offerings made men to his memory !
 (*All lie down to sleep.*)

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Apart from Suffering never can be Song ;
 Apart from sweat of brow no sword is forged ;
 Heroic spirit conquers all life's ills ; 605
 Deeds nobly done are sweet unto the soul,
 And wine most rich for those who follow on.
 Thrice happy he whose name rings down the years,
 For he had reason in this world to come ;
 A flaming torch is he when times are dark ; 610
 A torch ne'er burning low, ne'er 'minished to a spark !

VLADIKA DANILO (*with them, but speaking as if alone*)

There where the seed doth first begin to sprout,
 There may it quietly grow and bring forth fruit ;
 Is this mere instinct, or the spirit's leading ?
 Mere human knowledge finds quick arrestation ! 615
 As Wolf doth on the Sheep impose his might,
 So tyrant lords it over feebler fellow ;

596. Karoutche is a village in the district of Tsrnmitsa, where Ivan-beg defeated the Turks in 1477.

But foot to place upon the Tyrant's neck,
 To bring him to the consciousness of Right—
 This of all human duties is most sacred ! 620
 If thou canst calmly bloody sword embrace,
 If thou canst swim through waves of blackest night,
 Such sacred strife shall sanctify thy dust.
 Europa's cleric from his Christian altar
 Doth scoff and gibe at Asia's Minaret : 625
 With thundrous strokes the Asiatic club
 Shatters those fanes where Crucifix is rear'd,
 Blood innocent is shed within our shrines,
 And relics scatter'd to the winds in dust.
 Above a world of travail God keeps silent : 630
 The Crescent and the Cross, great Symbols twain,
 Do no advantage gain save in a world of slain !
 It is our lot to sail this crimson stream,
 Toss'd here and there upon Life's labouring ship,
 The equal fate is this of Christian and of Turk ! 635
 When Renegades blaspheme our relics blest,
 Relics of saints who gave our childhood light,
 The Nether World doth rise into my soul.
 Men brook no flaw upon the sapling straight :

625. The literal rendering of this line is:—

"Blasphemes and spits upon the altar of Asia."

629. The Turks, for instance, burnt the remains of St. Sava, and scattered the ashes to the winds.

633-5. Reference is here made, of course, to the perpetual and bloody warfare between Turk and Christian, defending their ancestral faith.

636-8. But much more tragic is the strife between those who should have been united in the faith of Christ, between the Christian Montenegrins and those who had gone over to Islam.

639. The "sapling straight" is indicative of youthful tender-

Should there be blemish on the Day's Bright Eye— 640
 Shall Crescent rival be of Jesu's Agony!

O my true Faith! How orphan'd, poor and wretched!
 O hapless tribe! How long shall last thy sleep?
 One little race—that one as good as none!
 For thou art only martyr'd but the more! 645
 Force diabolic every side doth threaten:
 Oh, had we brethren somewhere in the world
 To weep for us, 'twould be some kindly aid.
 Dark night holds firm her heavy sway:
 The Moon to me now seems to be my Sun. 650
 Alas! my leaden thoughts! what waters have I
 swum?

Young corn of Serbia! ripen into ears;
 All premature shall Harvest come on thee.
 Holocausts all precious pilèd high I see,
 Before the Altar of our Church and Nation, 655
 While our dark mountains echo lamentation.
 We must uphold our Honour and our Name,
 All unremitting though that strife endure!
 Let come those things men thought could never be;
 Let Hell devour; let Satan swing his scythe: 660

ness and chastity. In Serbia a youth or maiden is often compared to some young tree: e.g. "two sons like two green pines", "among the brothers was a sister like a tall fir-tree".

640. "The sun's clear eye", i.e. the brightness of the Christian revelation, the revelation of God in Christ, the Sun of Righteousness (*vide* Old Testament, Malachi iv. 2).

644-9. The poet laments the loneliness and isolation of the small part of the Serbian nation who are defending the Church and nation.

652-6. The youth of the land will be prematurely slaughtered in battle.

Still graveyard turf shall bring forth many a flower,
For coming kindreds in Time's later Hour!

SERDAR VUKOTA

God be with us, He and all His angels!
Vladika, behold how thou art driven
By all the wanton, wandering winds that blow; 665
By gales of early spring when rules the witch;
By sombre autumn gusts the wizard doth control.
(The BISHOP starts from his dream.)

VLADIKA DANILO

Strike for the Cross! strike for heroic name!
 Whoe'er girds on his shining arms,
 Whoe'er hath heart within his breast,— 670
 Strike these blasphemers of Christ's holy Name!
 Baptiz'd be they, with water or with blood!
 Hunt we the leper now from out our fold;
 Let chanted be some terror-bringing song;
 Let the true altar rise on blood-stained stone! 675

661. The flowers of freedom shall blossom for future generations as a result of their sacrifice.

666-7. The people believe that in March and October, during windy and cloudy weather, the witches are most active in their evil work. It is a popular superstition that, at night-time, the wizard spirits meet in the mountains, fighting between themselves, uprooting trunks of trees which they use as weapons in their onslaughts on each other, although their name, indeed, in Serbian really means "witch-pursuer" (Vjedogonja), in earlier times it being supposed that they fought the witches.

(The chieftains leap to their feet and loudly shout:

“Let it thus be, or never be at all!”)

VLADIKA DANILO

Nay, . . . nay, . . . sit down, let us discuss yet more !
 Brethren, now let us with accordant voice
 Invite the heads of Serbo-Islam's tribes,—
 Our brethren—to confer on all these matters,
 With word of honour for their safe return ; 680
 Perchance they may unto our faith revert,
 And thus extinguish'd be this blood-feud shame.

SERDAR YANKOVITCH

So be it, Bishop, this will we essay,
 But on my faith in God ! 'twill be in vain ;
 He who was nurtur'd by the devil black, 685
 Abides him faithful to the very end.
 E'en without pledges will they to us come,
 And will before us very stoutly stand,—
 Chieftains, in truth, thou hast them call'd,
 But they do call themselves the Sultan's sons ! 690
*(Three or four men are sent to invite the Turks to a
 meeting.)*

THE KOLO

A bitter curse fell on a renegade :
 Against her will a mother curs'd her son,
 The Princess-Mother, wife of Ivan-beg,

693. The Princess Mother, Ivan-beg's wife, was Mara, daughter of Arianit, potentate of Albany.

Laid curse on Stanisha, her son,
 Because he bit her breast when taking milk;— 695
 So heavenly nurture down her bosom pour'd!
 The parent's curse did fall upon the child:
 Stanisha play'd false to Faith and Honour,
 Prov'd traitor base unto Christ's holy Name;
 On Tsernoyé's brave tribe he cast foul slight; 700
 Embrac'd the faith of bloody Moslem foe,
 And thirsted e'en for very kindred blood.
 What thunderings dread above Lieshko-Field:
 Two brothers fight on question of Religion,
 A thousand warriors drawing sharpest sword! 705
 The mother's curse falls sure upon her son:
 That son's whole army perish'd on the field!
 Stanko fled headlong—straight to Bazayèd,
 To dine with him on dish of Magyar noses.
 Thou Mountain-Nest for Freedom's Quest! 710
 On thee God's eye hath kept a constant guard;
 What sufferings hast thou not endured;
 What victories yet brings Time as thy reward!

699. After the death of Ivan-beg, his youngest son, jealous of his elder brother who occupied the throne, went over to the Moslem faith and got the name of Skender-beg.

703. It was upon Lieshko's field that Skender-beg met his elder brother, George, and was defeated by him.

709. Skender-beg may have helped Bajazit in his war against the Hungarians. From this same Bajazit he received Zeta with Skadar (Scutari) as his dominions, which included a part of what was known later as Novi-Pazar Sandjak. We are told that the mighty Bushtali Pasha family of Scutari, so famous until the second half of the XIXth Century, were descended from the same Skender-beg.

Turkish Chieftains come, seven or eight, and sit down with the Montenegrins. They all keep silence, and do not venture to raise their eyes.

KNEZ YANKO

Ye wretches, are ye petrified !
 Why do ye not begin some sort of speech, 715
 Or night will overtake you in your sleep !

HADJI-ALI MEDOVITCH (*Kadi*)

Sure, right art thou, Knez Ozrinitch !
 I will begin, seeing no other will.
 One hundred chieftains are now gather'd here,
 Chiefs of ours and chieftains Montenegrin ; 720
 Full well I know why we are come :
 To make a peace and end our mutual strife.
 Come now, O chieftains of the land !
 Some method should we now devise
 To reconcile two warring families : 725
 The Velestovtzi and the Turks of Tcheklitchi ;
 Then the Baitzi and the Alitch clan.
 Let us now try to make a peace between them,
 Or some good step at least let's make towards peace !
 First will I be to stand among the sponsors, 730

726. Velestovtzi, i.e. Christians from the village of Velestova. Tcheklitchi : see note on line 287.

727. The Baitzi were of the village of that name, and belonged to the Martinovitch clan. They killed Mouyo Alitch and his brother, when they carried away Kasan's wife, Ruža (*vide* lines 453-98).

730. When the murderer wishes to make peace with the family of the murdered man, he sends the best of his relations

And for life ta'en to hand a solemn wergild;
 Let peace but rule again! The dinar cut in twain,
 And hang upon the wall these murd'rous rifles!

KNEZ ROGAN

Effendia, thou dost not divine
 The wherefore of our meeting here; 735
 Of problems great thou touchest smallest end.
 Learned and wise art thou, 'tis said,
 Hast out of books in Stamboul read,
 And gone as pilgrim to some sort of Mecca;
 Yet more of wisdom still must fall on thee 740
 If in our school thou wouldst good scholar be!
(All again are silent, with eyes upon the ground.)

VLADIKA DANILO

O God of Mercy, Thou Who rulest all,

to beg for peace. Behind this envoy go twelve mothers, each holding a not yet baptized baby, and if the family agree to reconciliation, they provide godfathers for the infants.

731. Wergild: as those acquainted with early British history will, of course, know, this was the sum paid over by the murderer to the family of the murdered man by way of indemnity and reconciliation.

732. The peace-token is given as follows: The murderer and the nearest relation of the slaughtered person take a silver piece (dinar, in value equal to the franc), and the chief of the village cuts it with a knife, each party retaining half, as pledge and token of reconciliation.

733. The rifle with which the murderer has killed the deceased is hung upon the murderer's neck, and he crawls to the chief of the offended family on all fours. The chief helps him to rise, and takes over the rifle, which is henceforth kept by the family of the slaughtered person.

Who sittest Governor on Thy heavenly throne,
 Who light and warmth dost give with glance of power;
 Who wheel'st the planets in their orbit bright, 745
 And to vain dust hast given beauteous form,
 Who spread'st this Earth beneath Thy throne of light,
 And hast thought fit to name it world of Thine,—
 Thou putt'st life in particles minute,
 And add'st thereto intelligence and mind; 750
 The Book of all Creation Thou dost hold—
 That Book in which the destinies are writ
 Of sentient things and beings spiritual;
 Thou art in bounty graciously inclined
 The agile members to endue with power 755
 Both of proud lion and of the little ant!—
 Send cheering light on Montenegro's Mount;
 Forbid dread thunder and the lightning's bale;
 Hold back all clouds outpouring cutting hail!
 So greatly maybe they have not transgressed: 760
 Unfaithful souls seduced them from the faith—
 Entangled them—all in the Devil's Net!
 But what is Man? In truth, a feeble creature!

(The Turks view one another askance.)

E'en to chill lip of Age is honey sweet,
 And how much sweeter unto Youth's warm taste: 765
 Sweet was the bait, though it had likewise hook,—
 "Either take sherbet from the Prophet's cup,
 Or wait his stroke of axe between thine ears!" . . .

761. The Montenegrin renegades are the descendants of the followers of Skender-beg (line 699). In the Battle of Lieshko Field the Montenegrins took many of them prisoners, and gave them land and liberty of religious profession.

Life's honour may be stain'd through fear of death;
 We creatures frail—we cleave unto the earth; 770
 Though slight the bond, it yet may firmly bind;
 The fragile bird falls helpless down before
 The light that glistens in the fox's eye,
 Though she has gazed unharmed at soaring eagle!

Sad news concerning brother or of son 775
 Deepens threefold affection felt of yore;
 Sweeter to find the lost than ne'er to lose at all;
 As after hailstorm clearer is the sky,
 So after sorrow more serene the soul,
 And after tears more joyous is the song! 780

Oh, that these eyes of mine might but behold
 Requitall made for all my country's loss,
 Then could I deem that Right had sway—
 If light from Lazar's Crown might on me shine,
 If unto us bold Miloš might return! 785
 All tranquil then would be my soul,
 As some fair morn in vernal Spring,
 When gently moving winds and fleecy clouds
 Do sleep upon the bosom of the sea.

(The Turks look darkly at each other.)

SKENDER-AGA

In name of my fair faith, I marvel 790
 That such reproach, O Bishop, thou shouldst make!

769. With reluctance and with dread did Stanisha and his followers go over to Mohammedanism.

772-4. The fox fascinates only the smaller birds; so also the Turkish faith may fascinate the weak, but not the hero.

784-5. Lazar and Milosh are symbols of Serbia's glory and heroism.

What cup at once yields diverse drinks—
 What cap at once upon two heads is worn?
 The lesser stream doth run into the larger,
 And mingles with it, losing e'en its name, 795
 Till nameless both, when they do meet the sea!
 Say, wouldst thou with thy cap be hunting bees,
 And in grey mountains beehives tend?
 Honey from thence no man would budge to eat!
 Huge stone thou rollest vainly up high hill; 800
 Old boughs bend not, they break before they straighten;
 The woodlands wild show parables to men;
 Each several folk hath its peculiar faith;—
 Neither 'bout eagle nor 'bout cock I ask,
 But 'bout a goose—fears lion the goose?—Tell me! 805

KNEZ ROGAN

I marvel also at this talk!
 The priest the sinner on his sin doth question,—
 If Satan hath not led him from right way?
 But never have I seen the Devil
 Making confession to the priest! 810

KNEZ YANKO

Should question me my wife where I have been,
 I shall tell her: "I have been sowing salt."
 And woe to her if she should not believe!

804-5. He will not dignify the Montenegrins by even suggesting the former comparison; they are but geese compared with the Turkish lions.

809-10. As there is no mention of the repentance of the Devil, so the renegades do not repent their change of faith.

812. This is a scornful allusion to the conference which has just been held, "sowing salt" being a popular expression for futility.

KNEZ BAIKO

There cometh now a story to my mind :
The Devil, when he from the pit was drawn, 815
Had face half white and face half black !

OBRAD

Into my nose hath flown a fly ;
Some sort of ill will come to me !

VUK RASLAPCHEVITCH

Why, sure I have an itching palm.
If anywhere there should be quarrel 820
We would demand a handsome ransom.

VOIVODA MILIYA

A gun indeed ! Is anywhere a heavier !
In name of God and man, what dost thou with it,
Stanko?

VOIVODA STANKO

Alas ! my brother, I am weary of it ;
For long time now no worth hath it for me. 825

SERDAR YANKO

Last night how I did shake with laughter !
Into my house from somewhere came

814-16. The following story will throw light upon these lines: There was a prolix and shrewish woman who gave great trouble to her husband, so he threw her into a pit in a moment of excitement. Some days after, repenting, he let down a rope, and drew up the devil instead of his wife, half of the evil one being white and half black—he had been turned half white by worry!

Two handsome youths of Bielitsa ;
 And, as their wont is, they began to joke :
 They told how, one time, ancestors of theirs 830
 Upon a certain place did build a mill,
 Where there was neither stream nor pond ;
 When all was built, then thought they 'bout the water !

VUK MANDUSHITCH

My brother's wife, alas ! she lost her reason,
 And without cords she could not be held in ; 835
 The Books Prophetic straightway I did open :
 Some said, "Where dogs have scrapped, sure she hath
 trod !"
 But others cried, "By magic arts she is bewitched !"
 I took her round to all the monks,
 Who read ; upon her pour'd their holy oil ; 840
 In every cloister I besought the Devil
 To grant some respite unto our Angelia ;
 Alas ! the Devil I did vainly conjure !—
 At last I took my whip of triple thong,
 And scourg'd her garment right into her flesh ;— 845
 The Devil said Adieu ; he came not back ;
 And so was heal'd Angelia !

828. The Bielitsa clan dwelt north of Cettigné and south of Ozrinitch.

836. The Books Prophetic here refer, of course, not to the Old Testament prophets, but to the magical books of the wizards. For the exorcizing of evil spirits resort was had to an admixture of ancient superstition with the Christian revelation.

837. Reference is here made to the popular belief that the person stepping upon a spot where dogs (or foxes) had been

VOIVODA BATRITCH

My brother Turks (may the winds take the word!),
 Why hide we truth, or wherefore wrap it up?
 Our little land is pressed on every side; 850
 Hard task it is for us in her to stay;
 Mighty the jaws that open to devour her;
 Who then should dream to split our stock in twain?
 But take ye once again your Fathers' Faith,
 In order with us to defend our honour! 855
 The wolf needs not the cunning of the fox,
 Nor hath a falcon need of glass to spy!
 Have done with minarets and mosques!
 Let flare the Serbian Christmas-log;
 Paint gaily too the eggs for Eastertide; 860
 Observe with care the Lent and Autumn Fasts,
 And for the rest—do what is dear to thee!
 If ye take not the counsel that I give,
 Why, then, I swear by name of Obilitch,
 And by these arms in which I put my trust, 865
 That both our faiths—they *both* shall swim in blood:
 And that which better is—it surely shall not drown!
 Bairam agrees not with our sweet Noël—

scrapping became affected in his mind, sinking into a dull melancholy.

861. The Lent and Autumn Fasts are the longest and most important fasts of the Orthodox Calendar.

868. "Bairam", a Turkish word meaning Feast-day. In the Mohammedan calendar there are two great festivals—Little Bairam, following on the great Fast of Ramazan, and Great Bairam, which is commemorative of Abraham's sacrifice. "Little Bairam" used to be celebrated at the beginning of the month of October, and "Great Bairam" is seventy days later.

Brothers Montenegrin, is't not so?

(*All cry: "'Tis so! 'Tis so!'*)

MUSTAI KADI

"Is't so? Is't so?"—Ye surely are all mad? 870
 Would ye give noxious prick to healthy leg!
 What mean ye—"eggs and fasts and Christmas logs"?
 Would ye graft such upon our Prophet's Faith?
 Night is the time for torches to be lit:

Away with torch when comes the light of day! 875

In Allah's name, what parleys these for wisdom!
 Of "Cross" or "Unbaptiz'd" they ever talk—
 Dream of a way that *we* can never walk!

Allah be praised! Two hundred years have passed,
 Since first we took the true Faith of our Prophet, 880
 Since first we bow'd within the sacred mosque:
 By the Holy Kaaba, there's no trickery here!
 Of what avail the weakly faith of Christ
 Against the edge of our sharp, supple steel?
 When the true saint brings down but once his club, 885
 The land doth tremble underneath the stroke,
 Like empty pumpkin bobbing on the water!

Handful of mortal men! Why thus so blind?
 All ignorant of sweets in Paradise to find,

872. In Southern Slav lands the egg is a very prominent feature in the Eastertide celebrations. They are usually stained a rich red colour; they are never left uncoloured. But often they are most brightly adorned and inscribed.

883-4. The Kadi says "limewood cross" in contemptuous allusion to what he regards as the weakness of Christian peoples, the lime in Yugoslavia being taken as the antithesis of the oak.

Ye fight with God and also fight with Man ; 890
 Without Hope's kindly light ye live and die,
 Owning Christ's Cross, yet living after Miloš!
 "The Cross"—it is with you an empty phrase ;
 Your Miloš throws you into some strange stupor,
 Or else intoxicates to wild excess. 895
 Better one day of prayer within our mosque
 Than four whole years of making Christian crosses !
 O Hurias ! With those eyes of blue !—
 In agelong rapture might I gaze on you !
 Where is the cloud-shade that could rise 900
 To shield me from those star-like eyes?—
 Those eyes from which keen arrows dart—
 Their burning rays would fire cold stone :
 Then what of me !—a weakly wight
 Made but to melt beneath their light ! 905
 Such eyes are like to crystal water,
 In which, as in two pearls of dew,
 Thou gain'st of God some deeper view,
 See'st more of God than on some clear Spring morn,
 When from the mountains shimmers silver sea ! 910
 O Stamboul, thou delight of Earth !
 Thou honey'd Cup, Thou Mount of sugar'd pleasures !
 Thou sparkling bath of life and light,
 Where in sherbet bathe the fairies !
 O Stamboul, Palace of the Prophet ! 915
 Thou sacred source of strength and might,
 From thee alone finds Allah his delight

892. The Kadi implies that the Cross is weak, and Miloš Obilić, the glory of Serbia, has long since passed away.

By his Great Prophet earth to rule—
 Could aught sever me from Thee!

How many hundred times in days of youth, 920
 Fresh from my sleep I've stepped towards the Dawn,
 Thy sea of light all wond'ringly to greet—
 Reflected there thy visage fair,
 Fairer than sun or moon or morn—
 In silver mirror there to greet the sky, 925
 And all thy towers and minarets sharp pointed;
 To hear uprise into the azure blue,
 At break of day in all the peace of Dawn,
 A thousand, thousand holy voices,
 Proclaiming to high heaven, "Allah alone is great", 930
 And upon all the Earth Mahomet's name and dower;—
 What Faith with ours could ever bear compare?
 What other Altar Allah's favours share?

KNEZ YANKO (*raising his cap*)

Thus, Effendia, thank I thee!
 Pretty sermon hast thou preached: 935
 What we sought, that we have surely found!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Let Cross and Club together strive,
 But woe to him whose forehead shall be broken:
 A whole egg gains o'er egg that's cracked,
 Ye'll hear of what I do—shall I so will! 940

939. An allusion to the Easter custom of striking one egg against another. The holder of the broken egg forfeits it to the owner of the one that's whole.

KNEZ YANKO

Upon my Faith, for my own part,
 No more of this I'll hear!
 { This hodja who's from Cheklitché,
 { He crieth out "Oo-hoo!"
 { High perched upon his hollow stem,
 { As hoots an owl upon some age-worn tree.
 Whom calls he so, on high, 945
 From morn to morn, as day doth dawn?
 I trow he now hath call'd enough!
 I must confess it easier were for me,
 If standing on my head were he!

KNEZ ROGAN

My left ear, how it now doth tingle! 950
 It means, I hope, some joyful news.

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Come now, Baiko, blow into mine eye;
 A grain of dust doth make it very sore!

SERDAR YANKO

Strike now some fire that we may smoke;
 For smoke is Islam's very soul: 955
 Effendia will not be displeased.

942. Cheklitche, see note on line 726.

944. Hollow stem—depreciatory for "minaret".

TOMASH MARTINOVITCH

Now do the ravens croak and fight;
Cheap meat shall quickly come to sight!

VOUKOTA MRVALYEVITCH

Over my rifle step not, Baiko,
Unless to step again—step back across it! 960

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH (*whispering in YANKO's ear*)

He holds on to the tail of Hadji-Hadja,
Nor will ever lose his grip,
Till either dog or millstone go!

SKENDER-AGA (*displeased, seeing VUK whispering*)

What meaneth this, my brothers Montenegrin?
Who is it so hath fann'd this flame? 965
This thought unhappy—whence can it e'er be
To converse thus of vile apostasy?
No perverts ask we; we can brothers be;
Do we not fight and fight together,
Share we not good and ill as brothers? 970

959. The superstition is: should someone step over a rifle it loses its accuracy of aim; to restore it to its proper condition the person must step back over it.

961. Hadji-Hadja, i.e. a derisive term for the Prophet, meaning "The Pilgrim-Pilgrim", because he gave sanctity to the Mecca pilgrimages (A.D. 629).

963. When a dog begins to lick the flour from a millstone he wants to keep on doing it; to stop it one must wait either for the death of the dog or the breaking of the millstone. There is, indeed, a Montenegrin saying: "Kill the dog, or break the millstone."

Doth not veil'd Moslem girl, like Serbian maid,
Offer fair tresses on the hero's grave?

SERDAR VOUKOTA

O Land, thou art accurst, and fallest all to ruin!
Most dread and horrible thy name is now to me!
O Land, if I some knightly son may have, 975
In youth's first blush thou takest him from me;
Or if perchance I have some valiant, dear-lov'd brother,
He too is snatch'd away before his time;
Or if were mine some lovely bride—
A bride more sweet than any wreath of flowers— 980
She too would victim fall to thy fell scythe.
My Land, I see thee delug'd in our blood,
Now thou art nothing more in very truth
Than heaps of bones and mouldering tombs,
Whereon our youth, resolv'd and without fear, 985
Holds solemn festival with War and Death!
O Kossovo, Thou Field of ever tragic name,
No heavier doom had Sodom in her flame!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Shame on thee, Serdar, for such show of speech!
Why all these young and ardent breasts, 990
Why all these eager-beating hearts within,
Whose quick blood courses through warm veins of
pride?
Say, what are they? Sure sacrifice most noble,

971. The Serbian women when lamenting the loss of the nearest male relative (excepting the husband) cut their hair.

988. An allusion to Genesis xix. 24.

From fields of battle taking flight
 Into fair realms of poesy ; 995
 Like unto sparkling pearls of dew,
 Which the sun takes in joyous light to heaven !

What greater shame than growing old,
 With faltering step and heavy eye,
 With brain grown cloudy in its bony case, 1000
 With peevish look upon the deep-lined face,
 And brow all wrinkled, ugly to the view,
 The dim eyes sunken in perplexèd head,—
 Death's ghastly grin upon the parchment skin—
 As peers the tortoise from beneath his shell ! 1005

Why spak'st thou so of Kossovo and Milosh?
 Our common weal collaps'd in ruins there,
 Yet Montenegro's name and strength of arm
 Came forth again from Kossovo's dark tomb,
 Beyond the gloom into a Realm heroic, 1010
 Where Obilitch with knightly souls holds sway.

SERDAR IVAN PETROVITCH

Mahomet gives you all a stupid head !
 Ye Turks, woe be unto your souls !
 Why deluge all the land in kindred blood?
 Two steeds make one too many for one manger ! 1015

FERAT ZATCHIR (*Kavaz-bacha*)

Thy rifle, Serdar, findeth not the target !
 He cannot hear his faith blasphemed,
 That Turk who still hath head on shoulders !
 Small enough is this our land,
 Yet two faiths there still may be, 1020

As in one sàhan soups agree.
Let us still as brothers live,
Of further love no need have we!

KNEZ YANKO

Fain would we, but it cannot be;¹
Such love as this were laughing-stock! 1025
No mutual love doth light our eyes,
A brother's glance we ne'er exchange,
Our looks are those of vengeful hate;
What saith the heart, the eyes must state!

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Brothers, see! How fine a sàrouk! 1030
Where hast bought it, Aga?—by the Prophet say!

ARSLAN-AGA MUHADINOVITCH

By purchase, Vuk, it did not come to me;
The Vizier gave it me as present,
This summer when I went to Travnik.

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Upon thy love, such sàrouk get for me, 1035
Then ox from out the yoke I'll give to thee.

ARSLAN-AGA MUHADINOVITCH

I'll give it thee for present, Vuk,
If to my son thou koum wilt be;

1021. *Sàhan*: of Turco-Arabic origin, signifying *soup-plate* or *dish*.

1030. *Sàrouk*: also of Turkish origin, meaning *turban*.

¹ An admirable analysis of the history of Islam from the psychological and spiritual side is to be found in *Moslem Mentality*, by L. Levonian, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1928.

It will great gladness for us make
True-hearted koum like thee to take.

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Without baptizing, how can there be koum? 1040
But to the font four times I'd go with thee.

ARSLAN-AGA MUHADINOVITCH

'Twixt baptism and haircutting me the difference tell?

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Koum I'll be—a real koum; a mere stand-by never!
(*A great uproar between Turks and Montenegrins; the
wiser intervene to prevent slaughter. Then all are
silent.*)

THE KOLO

Serdars three and Voivodas two;
Three hundred heroes coming with them keen; 1045
And Falcon Baio with his thirty dragons—
His name must live as long as Time endures!
Up they came on Suliman the Vizier,

1042. The first time a little boy has his hair properly cut and goes into knickerbockers, though not the occasion of a religious ceremony, is an event demanding a witness, who may be of any faith, a Turk to a Christian, or vice versa. This witness is ever a good friend, but not a real *koum* or "godfather".

1046. Baio was a famous Haidouk chief. The Haidouks were the Robin Hoods of Serbia.

1048. Souleyman the Vizier, or Shendjer (A.D. 1690), Pasha of Scutari (or Skadar), attacked Montenegro, and after having defeated them on the plain of Vrtielka set on fire the monastery of Cetinje as well as the palace of Ivan-beg.

'Neath Vertielka, there upon the plain;
 There they fought from summer dawn to noon: 1050
 No Serb by Serb was falsely there betray'd;
 At none shall After-time cast word of shame,
 Nor speak with scorn of one dishonour'd name—
 Not shame as that to Brankovitch once came!—
 All fell there; fell one beside the other; 1055
 Fell each a-singing, Turks the while still killing:
 Three alone came forth from out the slaughter,
 Out from all the heaps of Turkish slain,
 Bleeding from wounds—the Turks had gallop'd o'er
 them!
 Many a glorious death repaid maternal pangs! 1060
 Unto these our heroes will God amply dower
 Memory most fair and fragrance o'er their graves.
 Heroes three thousand all steadfast together
 'Gainst Suliman the Vizier measur'd forces
 By Krstatz Field 'fore break of day; 1065
 God helps the strokes of him who strives:
 The Vizier's might was broken quite!
 Happy the man whose spirit urg'd him there,
 To him Kossovo's Field no pain shall yield,

1049. Both the plain and the forest of Vrtielka are quite close to Cetinje.

1061-2. It is usual to give a memorial service to every man after his death, and to sprinkle his grave with wine and burn incense. But the people hold that when a man dies in the heroic defence of faith and country God Himself takes care for the honouring of his memory. Moreover, he is counted as a martyr, and his death must be avenged.

1065. Krstatz field lies between Montenegro and Austria, in the country of the Pashtrovitch tribe.

1066. Cf. the British saying, "Fortune favours the brave".

Nor 'gainst the Turk shall futile anger flare! 1070
 Hail, Serbian knights of Vertielka Field!
 The torch so lit shall never, never wane;
 It shall illumine the tombs in Memory's sacred Fane!

*(Ten Gavaz come from Podgoritzza, sent by the new
 Vizier, who is making a tour of the empire; they
 give to VLADIKA DANILO a letter, which he reads
 thoughtfully.)*

VOIVODA BATRITCH

Say, Vladiko, what writes the Vizier?
 We will not anything be hid— 1075
 Though e'en it were that all the Turks had wings!

VLADIKA *(reads word by word)*

"Selim Vizier, slave unto the Prophet's slave;
 "Servant of the Brother of the world's great Sun,
 "Envoy of him who ruleth all the Earth,—
 "Now be it known, Ye Nobles with your Bishop, 1080
 "The Ruler of all rulers me hath sent
 "To make a tour of this round world;
 "To see how every State doth stand;
 "To see that wolves do not o'er-eat;
 "To see that lambs, escaping care, 1085
 "Do not their fleece in thickets tear;

1072. The people believe that from the grave of a saint or hero there is to be seen a small flame, in Montenegro called a "torch" or "candle".

1077. The Sultan is the slave of the Holy Prophet, and Selim Vizier is slave of the Sultan. The Turks say: "Mahomet is the sun of the world, and the Sultan is his brother."

"To shorten that which is too long ;
 "To pour out what is overfull ;
 "To cast an eye o'er teeth of youth ;
 "To pluck the roses way from thorns ; 1090
 "From out the mire to pick the pearl ;
 "To bridle well the raya herd—
 "This raya herd of village cattle.
 "Well, of your mountains ever much I hear ;
 "The kindred of the Holy Prophet 1095
 "Can rightly prize true heroism :
 "Men speak false, if they should say
 "The lion ever fears the mouse !
 "Come under cover of my tent,
 "Thou, Bishop, and ye Serdars bold, 1100
 "Appear before the Imperial Sign ;
 "Take from my hand all goodly gifts,
 "Then live ye on, as ye till now have done.
 "Strong tooth can crack the hardest nut ;
 "Sharper good sword than spiked war-club, 1105
 "Then how much more than cabbage-head !
 "Is't not enough the reed to train,
 "That it bend not before the storm ?
 "Who can leaping torrents stay
 "From onward rush unto the sea ? 1110
 "Whoe'er should leave the pleasant shade
 "Of the Prophet's dreaded flag,
 "The sun like lightning will him shrivel up.
 "Did feeble hand yet ever forge tough steel ?
 "Doth pumpkin make not prison for the mouse ? 1115
 "Why champ the bit ?—it only breaks the teeth !
 "What use were heaven, if therefrom came no thunder ?

"Eyes have the rabble like to dirty water;
 "The common folk are awkward sort of cattle,
 "Docile only when they feel the whip. 1120
 "Woe to the land o'er which an army marches!"

KNEZ YANKO

With a smile, the trader lies;
 A woman lies the while she cries;
 But the Turk in lies all rivalry defies!

SERDAR YANKO

These envoys must not be detain'd; 1125
 Let them go hence with all due haste,
 For fear the Pasha anxiously debate:
 Let him know soon; then do whate'er he may!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Make answer, Vladika—as well thou canst—
 And save his face as he hath savèd thine! 1130

VLADIKA DANILO (*writing the answer*)

"From the Prince-Bishop and from all his nobles,
 "To Selim Pasha: Greeting responsive to the letter!
 "This hard nut is fruit that giveth wonder:
 "Thou crack'st it not, except thou crack thy teeth;
 "The price of wine is not what once it was; 1135
 "Nor is the world as ye have thought it!
 "Europe to give as present to the Prophet—
 "A sin 'twould be to think of it:

1130. "And save his face": in Southern Slav lands one finds in daily use the same idiom as in the West.

"That luscious fruit sticks half-way down his throat.
 "The blood of men is monstrous nourishment, 1140
 "Already to the nose it choketh up;
 "O'erfull the measure of your sins!
 "Mahomet's mare hath snapp'd her saddle-girth!
 "Duke Charles the Valiant of Lorraine;
 "John Sobieski; Prince Eugene the Noble,— 1145
 "They broke the Turkish demon's horns!
 "The scroll of fate reveals not lot the same
 "For two brothers having name the same!
 "Mohammed's horse did stumble at Vienna,
 "And down the hill his chariot roll'd. 1150
 "What good is empire to inhuman men,
 "Except to spread them shame thro' all the world!
 "A mind all wild with virulent desire
 "Becometh well wild hog, but not a man!
 "Along his path who maketh Might his Right— 1155
 "Rise stench of inhuman cruelty.
 "I have divin'd what thou wouldst wish to say!

1144-6. Duke Charles the Valiant of Lorraine, Generalissimo of the forces of the Emperor Leopold I, and Ivan Sobieski, King of Poland, defeated the Turkish Army besieging Vienna under the Great Vizier Kara Mustapha in 1683; in 1697 Prince Eugene, Duke of Savoy, at the head of the Austrian forces, defeated the Sultan Mustapha II at Senta on the Theiss, now situated in Yugoslavia. After these battles followed the Peace of Karlovci in 1699, according to which the Turks lost Erdely, Hungary (without Banat), and Slavonia. From this time the Turks began to lose prestige.

1147-8. These are Mohammed II, who conquered Constantinople in 1453, and Mohammed IV, whose army was defeated at Vienna in 1683.

1149. The name of Mohammed's horse was *Burak*, and he is so referred to in this line of the poem.

"Footprints are many to the cave :
 "For guests well hated is no feast prepar'd.
 "I know full well ye have no other thought 1160
 "Than greedy tooth to sharpen on your neighbours,
 "And only your own flocks to guard from wolves !
 "Narrow the way of entrance to the hives ;
 "For use against the bear is forged an axe ;
 "Of sheep and fair domain ye have enough, 1165
 "Yet still ye would both man and beast despoil !
 "Where e'er ye come, rise groans on every side ;
 "Bad men oppress'd by worse ; good men by bad !

1158. An allusion, of course, to the fable of the sick lion and the fox.

1165-6. Cf. *The Death of Smail-Aga Tchengitch*, by Ivan Mažuranić, published in the year 1846, pp. 42-3. English translation, 1925, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. :—

"The great Creator gave the birds the sky,
 Quiet hollows and the longed-for nest ;
 Unto the fish the waters, and the sea's blue depth,
 Translucent dwelling with wide space to move ;
 Unto the beasts gave He the woods and meadows,
 The caverns cool, the forests green ;
 But to the hapless raya gave not e'en
 A crust of bread to moisten with his tears—
 But what say I, for sure He gave good sky ;
 Let all the good of earth be spared for Turkish eye !"

Cf. also *The Gouslar's Death*, by Jovan Jovanovitch Zmaj :—
 Topal Pasha speaks :—

"Where'er I tread the creatures quiver,
 And raya souls do quit the earth ;
 E'en my brown horse will drink no water,
 Unless it be from blood-red river."

Published in *Serbian Songs and Poems: Chords of the Yugoslav Harp*, London, 1917, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.

"I have essayed descent upon your rope!
 "And, truth to tell, I was most like to choke; 1170
 "Friends at a distance since are we;
 "Into my head some wisdom have put ye!"

(The letter finished, he reads it aloud to all the Montenegrins and the Turks.)

KNEZ ROGAN

There is the letter, and now let's see your heels!
 Give it to him, and let it talk with him!
(The Vizier's Envoys sadly go away.)

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Here! take this cartridge! servant of the Sultan! 1175
 Take it, I say, as present to the Vizier,
 And tell him, too, that such shall be the price
 Of every single Montenegrin head!

RIDJAL OSMAN

What sayest thou? A cartridge for the Vizier!
 Thou insolent and unbelieving haidouk! 1180
 This is no language for a Vizier;
 Where Viziers come, they bring the aching fever,
 Then lighten only tears each mournful eye,
 And all the land re-echoes lamentation!

1169-70. See lines 86-7.

1180. The Haidouks were not infrequently the true Robin Hoods of the Southern Slavs; dwelling in the mountains, they avenged the oppressed and the poor, never giving peace to the Turk. "Monk and haidouk", writes Stoyan Novakovitch, "kept Serbia alive and liberated Serbia."

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

If guest thou wert not in our house, 1185
 I could give thee pretty answer!
 But this I'll tell thee, anyway:
 Haidouks both, say men, are we?—
 Haidouk he of slaves enchained;
 Better he, since he took more! 1190
 But haidouk I, who hunts haidouks,
 Haidoukship more famous far—
 I waste not fair lands and peoples;
 Though many a fiery-hearted tyrant
 Has fallen on his nose before me, 1195
 And many a wailing Turkish wife
 Behind me has unwound black wool!

*(The Vizier's Messengers depart. Two cockerels fight
 before a ring of men.)*

KNEZ ROGAN

What devil's tricks these birds do play!
 Wherefore fight they thus each other,
 And tear out so each other's eyes? 1200
 Thirty hens do watch behind them;
 These two cocks could live like Sultans,
 Did not some ill luck plague them ever!—
 But why concern their quarrels me,—

1185. The rules of hospitality forbid the host speaking to his guests as strongly as he otherwise would.

1191. See note, p. 133.

1196-7. Turkish women, and sometimes Montenegrin, used to unwind a skein of black wool after a foe, in order that bad fortune might pursue him.

Though I'd wish victory to the smaller! 1205
And thou, Aga, by the Prophet's beard?

SKENDER-AGA

I'd wish victory to the bigger:
Wherefore else should God give size?
He is bigger; let him have more power!
(*In the moonlight: all sitting round the fire, THE*
KOLO sings on the big threshing-floor.)

THE KOLO

{ O Novi Grad! O Novi Grad! 1210
{ Thou art seated by the sea;
Blue waves thou countest on the Main,
Like grey old man on grey stone seat,
Counting his beads with rosary!
Glorious dreams must thou have dream'd,
Till came Venetians off the sea, 1215
And Montenegrins from the hills,
To greet each other 'neath thy walls!
With blood to sprinkle and with water holy,
Since when thou hast not smelt of Infidels!
With twenty thousand men did Topal Pasha come, 1220

1210. Novi-Grad, or Herzeg-Novi, in Bocca di Cattaro.

1215. After the defeat of the Turks near Vienna in 1683 the Venetians made war against them in the following year, and in 1687 they attacked Novi-Grad, which had been from A.D. 1483 in Turkish hands, the Montenegrins lending their aid to the Venetians. The Turks were helped by the Vizier of Bosnia, Husein Topal Pasha, but he was defeated by the Montenegrins on the Kamen Vrh (Rocky Summit) above Herzeg-Novi. A little later the Turks yielded the town to the Venetians.

In hottest haste with help for Novi Grad :
 Our young Montenegrins met him
 On the narrow Kamen Field,
 Where perish'd fame of Turkish fez !
 The Turkish host—they sank all in one grave, 1225
 And still to-day is seen the place of skulls !

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH (*reclining by SERDAR
 YANKO's side*)

What wilt thou, Serdar, with this girdle?

SERDAR YANKO

I would wind it over all my clothes.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

What fortune bad has come on thee
 To put it thus o'er all thy clothes?

SERDAR YANKO

Evil dreams oppress me ever, 1230
 And I do choke when I would sleep !

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Have done with nightmares and black thoughts !

1230. Serdar Yanko complains of nightmare. In Serbian lands there is a belief that nightmare is due to the visitations of some repentant witch, who will no longer vampire-like draw their blood but simply make them suffer by oppressing them in sleep and making their breathing difficult. There is also a belief that bad dreams are caused by girls who are potential witches—who will become so when married. [See also Note on p. 137.]

Nor dreams nor witch thy bother be;—
 Why! thou art round as any barrel;
 Sure thy huge bulk is choking thee!—
 Ne'er yet have nightmares troubled me. 1235

SERDAR YANKO

True it is dream plagueth me,
 Though I do take horse-radish with me
 And thorn-sprig too within my doublet;
 But to keep off all bad dreams 1240
 Better is girdle spread above one's clothes!

KNEZ YANKO (*lying beside* KNEZ ROGAN)

How these Renegades do smell!
 Rogan! hast thou mark'd it well?

KNEZ ROGAN

How, Knez, should I fail to mark it!
 When, by my luck, I have to sit amongst them, 1245
 Then ever with both hands my nose I hold:
 I sure should vomit, if I did not so!
 I sleep o' nights right out upon the edge;
 For close to them I ne'er could live till morn.
 Thou seest now how far away they are, 1250

1241. Persons who suffer from bad dreams, in order to obtain less troubled sleep spread a broad and lengthy girdle or waist-band over the bedclothes, or place at the bedroom door a broom turned upside down!

Yet even here their odours vile we smell—
I' faith, each one is reeking infidel!

(At dead of night. All are asleep, but someone talks in his sleep, and KNEZ YANKO and KNEZ ROGAN, rising to see who it is, find VUK MANDUSHITCH talking as in broad daylight.)

KNEZ ROGAN

Mandushitch, what is the matter,
That all night long thou dost so chatter?

KNEZ YANKO

Do not, Rogan, rouse him up; 1255
It is his way in sleep to talk as in broad day;
Let us ply him with some questions,
And from him get at least some fun!

KNEZ ROGAN

I say, Vuk, what art thou telling 1260
About our good lord Milonitch;
Hath there been a row between you?

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Brother, nothing wrong is there between us;
His daughter-in-law—I've talked of her a little!

KNEZ YANKO

And what about?—All in secret, tell me now!

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Prettier she than any fairy, 1265

And she has scarcely eighteen summers ;
She's simply captured all my heart !

KNEZ YANKO

How "simply captured all thy heart"?

VUK MANDUSHITCH

"*How?*" askest thou ! 'tis no joke about the "*how?*" !
In all the world her like cannot be found ! 1270
Were I already not Godfather
Nine times for our good Ban Milonitch,
Sure the maiden would I soon have seized,
And flown with her across the world.

KNEZ YANKO

O silly boy ! Thy mother weeps o'er thee ! 1275
She's flown away already with thy wits.

VUK MANDUSHITCH

By devil's power or magic arts,
Or something worse than either two,
If I just catch her smile, this girl,
I feel the whole world round me whirl ! 1280
All this I could endure, if badly,
But one eve the devil had me
To pass a night in Milon's cabin :
Just at dawn, the moon still shining,
Flames rose in the new-mown field ; 1285
From somewhere came the girl,—just think !
Sat by the fire to catch the glow,

Marked in the cabins how all slept,
 And then unwound her lovely wreath of hair;
 Down fell her tresses to her waist, 1290
 She comb'd her locks about her bosom,
 With clear voice singing elegy,
 Like nightingale in bushy tree:
 So mourn'd she her husband's brother,
 Son dear-lov'd of Ban Milonitch— 1295
 He who was slain full year ago
 By Turks in Duga's rough ravine.
 The Ban would grudge that she should cut such
 hair,
 For more he prized her tresses fair
 Than his own son who perished there. 1300
 This girl's laments, they tore my heart;
 Her glowing eyes my spirit fired;
 Clear as the moonlight shone her brow;
 I wept—shed tears just like a child!
 How blest is Andriya so to leave the world, 1305
 When eyes so glorious thus weep o'er him,
 When lips so lovely thus do mourn him.

(KNEZ ROGAN *whispers to* KNEZ YANKO: "Ask him
 no more, for very honour, about things like
 these; else he will bleat out more.")

(*Day breaks; they rise.*)

OBRAD

Let me tell now what I have dreamt?—
 Now, in my dream I saw great crowds,
 Like unto some Church procession: 1310
 Scorching the sun, burning one's eyes from head;

Hard, too, the ground and dry, where'er we went,
 Till on such field as this we came,
 And there found rest beneath an apple tree,
 Beneath whose shade a clear brook played ; 1315
 Together we all gather'd in the cool,
 And there we pluck'd of apples ripe,
 So ripe and sweet, as sweet as sugar,
 While from the Gospels read the priest ;—
 When on the instant five Martinovitch, 1320
 The one behind the other, all arose ;
 Near to them also comrades three or four.
 All people look'd to see where they should go ;
 When, taking ladder, they climb'd on the church,
 Climb'd up, right up, on to the apse's top, 1325
 And thereupon did fix a golden cross.
 The cross it shone as sun shines on the forest,
 And on their feet stood all the people up,
 Bowing themselves before the Cross of Honour.
 Then I awaked from sleep in fear and dread. 1330

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Good luck befall thee—after so splendid dream !
 And my own dream was likewise wonderful :
 Guarding myself from some ferocious dogs,
 With my own sword I smote down five or six—
 When I shall join a haidouk band, 1335
 Sure Turks should fall to my strong hand !

1335. When the Montenegrins had determined to wreak vengeance on some Turkish oppressor, or make some attack on Turks in general, they would collect a sufficient number of fighting men from a village, tribe, or district, who would then elect their leader or *harambasha*. Then, especially in Herze-

SERDAR YANKO

Of wedding I have dreamt to-night :
 My Bogdan took him Turkish wife,
 In the church we did baptize her,
 And after that we married them. 1340
 (THE TURKS *all go away in file; sad and angry.*)

SERDAR VOUKOTA

Our father Ozra I did see last night :
 We were in all two hundred Ozrinitch,
 And we drove full two hundred horses,
 Wine for St. Michael's Feast to buy,
 And brought the wine from Cattaro back. 1345
 Songs we sang and fired our rifles :
 Gaining Potochiné's height,
 We saw three hundred men all seated,
 Each was cloak'd in green dolàma ;
 They'd tokés too, and each was arm'd, 1350
 And we thought, "Whoe'er should these be?
 Guests perchance?—yet 'tis not time!"
 But closer, saw we ancient Ozra
 With chosen heroes close behind him,—

govina but also in Bosnia too, they would stealthily put plans into execution. This raiding or avenging "band" is called a *četa*, and there is also a verb *četovati*, which means "to fight in such a band or troop". The clan Ozrinitch, to which Vuk Mitchunovitch belonged, was much distinguished for this kind of guerrilla warfare. One of the most famous of these *harambashes* in Montenegro was Ivan or Ivo Tsrnoyevitch, of whom the reader has already heard in this poem. To him were ascribed many marvellous exploits. He ward off innumerable Turkish assaults, and when at last forced more and more into difficulties by the enemy he did not surrender, but retreated deeper into the heart of the mountains.

No one of them is now alive! 1355
 A torrent of reproach they pour'd :
 "Why built we not a church at Tchevo,
 To honour Michael the Archangel?"
 Then we almost fell to fighting;
 I tremble still when I do all recall! 1360

VOUKOTA MRVALYEVITCH

Busy all night I was with dreams,
 Until I rose, and then I all forgot!
 (KNEZ BAIKO and VUK MANDUSHITCH are sad;
 neither will tell anything.)

KNEZ YANKO

Baiko, thou art a little sad,
 That which must be, let it be!
 Thy story give us—though it please thee not! 1365

KNEZ BAIKO

So will I, Knez! 'Tis all the same to me!
 I had a dreadful dream last night:
 Broken all my arms in pieces!
 Surely some ill awaiteth me,
 Or else some loss in family; 1370
 When thus I've dreamt upon my bed,
 Ne'er have I failed a death to see!

KNEZ ROGAN

Mandushitch, why thus downcast?
 Why tell'st thou not thy dream last night?

1371-2. The premonition found only too tragic fulfilment
 (*vide* lines 1913-2044).

VUK MANDUSHITCH

I've had no dream, nor can I tell a tale; 1375
All through the night I slept a most dead sleep.

KNEZ ROGAN

Something I'll tell, since others nothing say:
I dreamt that I saw Drashko Popovitch!
And lo! almost I could put down a wager,
Is it not he now coming down the field! 1380

SERDAR RADOGNA

Behold, how mean a thing is man,
Till now he's come not in our mind!
He, ablest of our Voivodas,—
Where's been our Drashko Popovitch?

SERDAR VUKOTA

Why, Drashko went away to Venice: 1385
When Souleyman on Cattaro came,
With beechwood guns he shell'd the town;
Stepan the priest was there that day,
And fir'd just once from Cattaro,
Hitting straightway the Vizier's gun,— 1390
Knocking its food right clean into its throat—
Into three hundred pieces shatter'd it!
Then gain'd the Priest a pension from the Doge—
A hundred sequins by the year.
Bow'd down with years is Stepan now; 1395

1386. See note on lines 1044-73.

So Drashko made his way towards Venice
To seek his father's pension from the Doge.

KNEZ ROGAN

Turn, turn the spit, my boys! Turn these half-dozen
rams,

That we may have our meal, and get us off towards
home.

*(VOIVODA DRASHKO arrives, kisses each of them,
embraces them, and sits down among them.)*

KNEZ ROGAN

Tell us something, Drashko, of what you've seen in
Venice! 1400

What sort of people found you over there?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

"What sort of people?" ask you, Rogan!—
Just like other people, none of 'em had horns.

KNEZ ROGAN

So, dear fellow! So none of 'em had horns;
But were they rich and handsome? 1405

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Brother, many a handsome man I saw,
But ten times more of ugly folk;
Too ugly much to look upon!
Many a rich man was there too,
Whose wealth indeed had made him mad,

1410

Made him like a silly child.
 On every hand the poor did stand,
 Toiling hard with sweat of brow,
 Simply to earn a crust of bread.
 Two men I saw between them bearing 1415
 Some kind of female on their shoulders.
 Seated in chair so round and lazy,—
 She weighed close on three hundred pounds!
 All through the streets they carried her,
 In daylight broad now here, now there,— 1420
 Regardless of all manly honour,
 Simply to earn a crust of bread.

KNEZ YANKO

What sort of houses have they, Drashko?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

No finer houses in the world!
 But with it all is pain and need; 1425
 All closely pack'd are they together,
 'Mid odours bad and noisome air;
 Pale and bloodless, too, their faces.—

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

But tell me now, how was thy welcome?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

What thinkest thou! who should receive me? 1430
 No one of them was known to me,
 From whom should then my welcome be!

Besides, a staring motley crowd
 Did hinder me from going out;
 They pointed and halloo'd at me, 1435
 When forth I went to view the town;
 So 'tis with us at Eastertide,
 When make our youths their masquerade!
 If I had not met a friend,—
 The son of Zané Grbichitch,— 1440
 I ne'er again had seen this land;
 There sure had left my bones to rest;
 But Zané gave me brother's welcome,
 And with me made the round of Venice.

VUK MANDUSHITCH

And are they valiant, Voivoda? 1445

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Nay, Mandushitch, i' faith they were not;
 Of heroism be nought said!
 With speeches fair they did decoy our brothers;
 Enticing, and then trapping them—
 Yea, our falcon brothers poor— 1450
 From Dalmatia and Croatia,
 Crowding their ships all full of them,
 And pushing them across the world:
 Thus did Venice heap up riches,
 Her will impose on towns and cities! 1455

1440. Milakovitch, in his *History of Montenegro* (p. 103), relates that Zane Grbichitch ran away from Vrtielka (see note on line 1048) with 1,560 soldiers, who were sent by the Venetians to help the Montenegrins, thus escaping the battle.

SERDAR IVAN

Their Courts of Justice, are they just?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

“Just” may be, but God help thee,
If thou wouldst not Turkish justice
In them not to come!

A monstrous building there I saw,
Where they did make and fit out ships, 1460

Where many thousand wretches toiled,
Weighed down by clank of heavy chains
They worked on vessels for the Prince;
Dreadful it was to stand there by,
Because of cries and lamentations. 1465

Some of these prisoners were made fast
By chains to huge, high-towering galleys,
Which on the silver sea they row’d,
Under burning summer suns,
Or drenching rains—amid all weathers! 1470

They scarce might move a single foot;
But like a dog chained to his kennel,
They dragged away their nights and days.
Yet worst of all their dungeons were;
Deep down beneath the Doge’s Palace; 1475

The foulest pits thou couldst imagine
Might not compare with these vile prisons.
A horse could not live long so kept,
And who would tie his dog down there!
Yet wretched men are stabled in them, 1480
Ay, men are shackled there below,

And drownèd too in those dread holes.
 A curse upon them ! I am numb
 Whene'er I contemplate their horrors.
 None dare compassionate his brother, 1485
 And still less come unto his aid.
 As I saw brave men suffer thus,
 My heart was pained, and out I cried :
 "Ye heathens all, what make ye here?
 "Why not boldly kill them off, 1490
 "Than torture men upon this wise?"
 Then Grbichitch, he said to me :
 "Let not such words escape thy lips ;
 "The truth to speak is here forbidden ;
 "Happy for thee they have not understood !" 1495
 List, brethren, what I tell to-day :
 These dungeons drear have taught to me,
 That such men must have greatly sinn'd,
 And therefore shall their Kingdom fall,—
 Fall into hands not so defil'd ! 1500

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Since thou thus canst prophesy,—
 Fear they none in all this world?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

What man is there entirely without fear?—
 If startled only by his shadow !
 No other fear, I ween, had they 1505
 Than of police and espionage :
 All Venice shook with fear of spies ;

When two men speak upon the street.
 The third bends ear to spy on them;
 Then with all speed runs to the court 1510
 To tell the tale of what he's heard,
 Adding thereto some pleasant relish;
 Whereon such speakers are arrested,
 And forthwith sent unto the galleys.
 On this wise perish half the people, 1515
 And trust no more the one the other.
 From end to end through all wide Venice,
 Cannot be found one single man
 Who doth not fear his fellow-creature,
 As lurking spy or sycophant! 1520
 The other day swore Grbichitch
 That just such spies and secret agents
 Had e'en denounced one day the Doge,—
 The Doge himself—'fore Senate and 'fore people!—
 Who was, indeed, brought to his end, 1525
 Upon the steps of his own Palace.
 Then how must others quake and tremble
 When they spare not the very Doge?

KNEZ YANKO

Have they diversions in this Venice,
 As we enjoy ourselves at home? 1530

1523. The Doge, i.e. Marino Falieri, who was angry with the Senate because it did not punish gravely a nobleman who offended his wife, and therefore conspired with the people to slaughter the nobility; but the Senate discovered his plot and compassed his death on the stairs of the Palace (April 17, 1355).

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Games there were, but not like ours :
 In some house they gather'd all,
 When night had fall'n, after supper ;
 Big was the house, and all the world was there.
 Thousands of candles brightly burned ; 1535
 Around the walls were curious holes,¹
 Holes that were all filled with people,
 As well as all the floor below.
 All looked out from these wall-pockets
 Like mice a-peep from out a nest. 1540
 Then suddenly a curtain rose,
 The third part of the place fell open !
 Upon my word, it was a wonder :
 Thence crept out all kinds of folk,
 (In all thy dreams ne'er hast thou seen such !) 1545
 So multi-coloured, like wild cats.
 Then shouts were heard all through the house,
 And all the people clapped their hands ;
 I was nearly dead with laughter.
 A little while, and they went out, 1550
 But others came to take their places ;
 Such ugliness, such dreadful folk,
 No one e'er had seen before :
 Noses they had a full foot long,
 And vampire-like their starting eyes ; 1555
 They ope'd their jaws like hungry wolves ;
 They walked around on wooden legs,
 On wooden legs like unto keys ;

¹ I.e. theatrical boxes.

In rags and tatters did they dress ;
 If one had met them in broad day, 1560
 His very hair had stood on end !
 Then from these wall-holes someone cried—
 May God give blessings on his head—
 “The house has fir’d ! Flee, flee away !”
 Picture thyself the hurly-burly : 1565
 Some were crying, some did shout ;
 Caps a-falling, things all breaking round about ;
 Many a poor one trodden down ;
 In the crush all squeez’d and chok’d,
 As herds stampeding from wild beast ! 1570
 Upon the morrow we a visit paid,
 But there was no one in the house ;
 Barr’d and bolted were all doors !
 The biggest fun I’ve kept till last :—
 With eyes askance you’ll at me glance— 1575
 In Venice is a wondrous joke,
 Men jump and dance upon a rope !

KNEZ ROGAN

O Drashko, can this all be true !
 Conjuring tricks they did for you !

VOIVODA DRASHKO

That I know not ; what I saw, I saw !— 1580
 I think with thee it might be magic.

OBRAD

What else could it be but magic !

My grandsire old I once heard say:
 To Cattaro's bay there came one day
 Some folk from Italy—or somewhere else— 1585
 To Bocco town on market-day,
 Who out-cried to all the people:
 "Look, ye people, at this cock!"
 And when the folk the cock did view,—
 His claw, it held a timber beam;— 1590
 A moment after, and we saw
 That the beam was only straw!
 Then, again to us they cried:
 "People, hear! To each some grapes in hand;
 "But if to them you place a knife,
 "Then take good care lest ill befall;— 1595
 "Pray cut them not with knife at all."
 Then all the people seize their grapes,
 And hold close to them all their knives:—
 A miracle ne'er seen before:
 The grapes all gone, they hold their noses, 1600
 And think from them to cut nice bunches!—
 Then cried a third upon a wall:
 "People, take care lest ye do drown!"
 {Whereon, upon the market square,
 {A rushing torrent pour'd,
 And maid and man from water ran, 1605
 When, on a sudden, stream was none,
 Nor yet a trace of water,

1586. The Montenegrins in former times, as also in more recent days, had allotted to them a part of the market in Cattaro, in front of the north gate.

Though still there stood with skirts upturn'd
Full many a gazing daughter!

{ Then when the people saw 1610
{ How well they'd been deceived,
{ All angrily they sprang
{ And would have kill'd each man,
{ But into Cattaro bay,
{ The wily Latins ran!

These tricks are much the sort of joke
That Drashko tells about the rope.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Well, do they sing unto the gouslé 1615
As prettily as we do, Drashko?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Gouslé in Venice! What think'st thou?
I never heard the word once named.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Without gouslé, for no game in the world
Would I give a Turkish farthing!
A house which hath no gouslé tones, 1620
There all is dead and dry as bones!

SERDAR RADOGNA

On everything we've questioned thee;—
But the Doge, Drashko, didst thou see?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Him saw I, brother, as I do see thee now.

SERDAR RADOGNA

And was he . . . What was he really like? 1625

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Why! just a man of middle size!
If his position weren't so high,
Sure he need fear no jealousy!

SERDAR RADOGNA

What did they call him, Voivoda?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Valiero: his other names I do not know! 1630

SERDAR IVAN

Did he ask thee 'bout our land?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Brother, he did, though I forget just how!
With Grbichitch I audience had,
And I did bow as I was told:
The Doge, he cast a smile towards me, 1635
And ask'd me questions 'bout our land,
Which made me think he lik'd us well,
For he remember'd all the wars

1630. Valiero, i.e. Sylvestro Valiero, Doge of Venice, 1694-1700.

When we sent men to help his Venice.
 He went on talking as a child, 1640
 Ask'd me all about our neighbours,
 The Bosnian Turks and the Albanians :
 "When such men catch a Montenegrin,
 "Be he alive or be he dead"—so he did say—
 "They eat him, eh? . . . or what do they?" 1645
 Could man eat man? Is there no God?
 Where the people that do eat their neighbours?—
 "I have heard tell", he next did say,
 "A folk your way at least eats snakes!"—
 How . . . eat snakes, my honoured Sire! 1650
 Not e'en to see them do our people care;
 They put on end our people's every hair!

KNEZ YANKO

I think that he received thee well!

VOIVODA DRASHKO

Not only well, exceeding well!
 Promis'd more than ever I did ask, 1655
 And methought, on taking leave,
 "I'm bless'd both now and evermore,
 "Good fortune cometh now to all our people;
 "Powder enough I'll carry back
 "At least to fire our guns against the Turks!" 1660
 But after, on the following day,
 These speeches fair had melted all away,
 And now I never would believe him,
 Though he should tell me milk is white!

KNEZ ROGAN

What kind of food gave they to thee? 1665
Didst thou get good dishes, Drashko?

VOIVODA DRASHKO

'Mong them I saw no food save bread;
Though true they serve some sort of sweets;
Three hours tasting they think makes a meal.
Two out of three of all their men, 1670
Though still quite young, are lacking teeth,
For they eat sweetmeats all day long!
{ I longed for flesh, but none was there;
{ Only just now I ate well here!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

In truth they are a wondrous folk!
Have you seen down at Cattaro 1675
Sovra, the man who governs there,
And other magnates all Venetian?
They like better egg or chicken
Than sheep's flesh or ball of cheese;
Untold the quantity of chickens 1680
That they eat up within a year!
From this lordly life they die,
With bellies big and no moustaches,
Their craniums dusted o'er with powder

1676. In Cattaro, of the many Venetian agents one had the title *Sovraproveditore*. As Sovra may be a Serbian Christian name (from Old Greek, *Sophronius*), the author of our Poem may have had an old document in which the two names were confounded.

And, like ladies, dangling rings at ear! 1685
 When they reach their thirtieth year,
 They get a face like some old hag,
 Too ugly are they to be seen;
 And even should they climb a stair,
 All pale they grow and linen-white, 1690
 And something rattles in their throat,
 As if had come their dying night!

*(The roast is served. YANKO asks who gave the ram,
 and looks upon its shoulder-blade ; they say that
 MARTIN BAITZA provided it.)*

SERDAR YANKO

What a fine blade and what fine fortune written!
 Through all thy life shall goodly things befall thee,
 Thy days shall bring thee wondrous luck. 1695

KNEZ ROGAN

Which part, suppose ye, may be ours?
 Is it from Cross or may it be from Pillar?

KNEZ YANKO

We've always held unto the Cross.

1695. See lines 2622-47.

1697. In Montenegro it is a custom to read the past as well as the future of a family by the inspection of the shoulder-bone of a sheep, the sheep being, of course, supplied by the family. The upper portion of the shoulder-blade is called the "Cross" and the lower the "Pillar". The signs to be found upon the "Cross" concern the Christians; those upon the "Pillar" the Turks, the "Pillar" corresponding to the Mohammedan minaret.

KNEZ ROGAN

I've picked a thousand shoulder-bones,
 Yet never read such dire misfortune! 1700
 Whose is this shoulder that I see?
 His family shall all die out,
 Nor round the house shall cock more crow;
 All pierced the bone right to the middle,
 As cobbler with his awl might pierce it; 1705
 This bone doth show a score of graves,—
 Not one outside the family!

*(All look wonderingly at the shoulder-blade; it is said
 to have been Skender-Aga's animal.)*

KNEZ YANKO (*looking upon the bone, and reading what
 he sees*)

Who owneth this hath twenty head of cattle,
 His granaries shall be well filled,
 His dwelling's beams are strong enough, 1710
 Fine and handsome all his horses;
 Wrapped up somewhere he has money,

1699. Vuk Karadzic remarks that the flesh must be taken away from the shoulder-bone with the fingers (see lines 1725-8).

1704-7. Underneath the socket-cup, on the even side of the bone, there are sometimes to be seen little holes, as if made with a needle; some of these holes are called "graves", the others "cradles". If they are farther away from the socket than a thumb-length it means that the graves or cradles are outside of the family (Vuk Karadzic).

1710. The strings or fibres from the socket-cup are called halter-cords, and herefrom is to be read the quality of the horses of the possessor. The right salient at the top of the bone is called the "beam", and from its strength is read the strength of the owner's house (Vuk Karadzic).

Though I should say it is not much,
And it is known to all his house.

VOUKOTA MRVALIEVITCH (*relates what he sees in another
bone*)

Somewhere see I booty rich, 1715
But mixed with blood and curst of God,—
A very Kossovo for slaughter!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Ye babble fortunes like old witches,
Like old witches with their beans!
Say, is there knowledge in dead bones 1720
Of what shall happen in the future?

VOUKOTA MRVALIEVITCH

Why pretendest thou to wisdom?
Since thou from bones hast read more futures
Than any ten of us have done!
No bone can one of us e'er pick, 1725
Ere thou dost snatch it from his lips;
So hast thou done a hundred times,
And done the devil's business too!—
Most of thy life thou hast spent thus.

VOIVODA BATRITCH

Come now, Vuk, of Liéshev Stoupa! 1730

1719. Old women foretell the harvest by reading boiled beans or other cereals.

1730. Lieshev-Stoup, a village in Bielitsa. *Stoupa* is a genitive form.

Thy gouslé take, and entertain us so;
Good we have had ; now give us something better !

VUK OF LIESHEV STOUP (*singing to the gouslé*)

O Plain of Tchevo, thou art nest of heroes,
And field where men most bloodily have fought ;
What memories of battles round thee circle, 1735
How many a mother thou to grief hast brought !
Thy plain is whiten'd o'er with dead men's bones ;
And drench'd with blood are all thy stones !
Since Vidov Day alway thy ground doth find
For ravens black and for brown howling wolves 1740
Rich meals of flesh of horse and humankind.
'Twas horrible to see how on that day
Clouds of black smoke made heavy pall alway ;
To thee one hundred thousand Turks had run,
And there was murderous crack of every gun ; 1745
While doughty men most furiously did cry,
And croaking ravens hover'd black on high.
As after darkness shineth forth the sun,
So towards evening clear'd the stormy sky :
How many Turkish corpses strewn o'er thee !— 1750
Men counted them, how many might there be,
But on their number none did e'er agree.

(*He lays down the gouslé.*)

VOIVODA BATRITCH

{ Cease not, Voutché, let thy song still flow,
{ Without thy gouslé, Time doth heavy go.

VUK

{As 'tis not in me, Voivoda, to sing on,
{It is better I should stop.

(Rifle shots are heard up the field. About a hundred and fifty men are singing.)

VOIVODA DRASHKO

What sounds are these? Are they not mad? 1755

SERDAR YANKO

They are the nuptial guests of Moustafitch.
The Turkish standard-bearer, Soulio, doth wed
The Kadi's niece from out the fort of Obod.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Not all the guests are Turks, it seems to me;
Among them there are Montenegrins. 1760

SERDAR YANKO

There are of Montenegrins there
A little less than half.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Whence come these house-dogs, pickers-up of crumbs,

1758. The fort of Obod was built by Ivan-beg Tsrnoyevitch on the river of the same name, but now called *Tsrnoyevitcha rieka* (see line 2704). This little fort capitulated in 1690 (see line 1048) to Souleyman Pasha of Skadar, and the renegades of Montenegro. When, later, the Montenegrins slaughtered the renegades of Montenegro they demolished the fort (*vide* line 2704).

These Brankovitchi, lickers-up of dishes?
Why make they comrades of the Turks? 1765

KNEZ YANKO

What a diabolic wedding,
To have no blessing from the Church,—
And copulate like any cattle!

SERDAR YANKO

'Mongst them there is no nuptial crowning,
They only make a kind of contract, 1770
As if they simply hired a cow;
Within the house no partner is the wife,
They hold her like a slave for selling,
And they tell you: Woman is for man;
As some sweet fruit or like roast lamb; 1775
While such she be, let her keep safe at home;
Be she not so, then throw her out of doors!

KNEZ ROGAN

In God's great name, oh! what a breed of dogs!
How drunk with evil and iniquity!
Where comes the Turk, there law doth cease to be; 1780
His heart's own lust—that is his only law,—
What he desireth not is writ not in the Koran!
(THE WEDDING GUESTS *are singing in the field.*)

1769. A Turkish marriage is celebrated before a priest, but is more of a contract than a religious ceremony. Nowadays it is usual to give money to the father of the girl—a relic of the earlier custom of buying the bride.

A MOSLEM WEDDING GUEST (*improvising*)

O Guerguelez, thou of quick falcon wing,
 Who on fleet steed to Paradise didst speed
 Of thy free will impell'd by no compulsion, 1785
 More quickly so to greet great Allah's Prophet!—
 The sweetest hourias sure have captur'd thee,
 That thus thou dost delay to us to come:
 Come—with no waiting! Make thee now swift way;
 Upon the back of thy wing'd charger come! 1790
 Forget thee not thy sabre, nor thy lance;
 Thy scourge infernal take with thee withal,
 Seeing the raya lifts again his head:
 Drive him once more as cattle back to stall,—
 Each wolf of thine doth snap his jaws with hunger! 1795
 Let brightly flash thy keen Damascus blade,
 That whelping dogs may bark not on the Prophet!

MONTENEGRIN WEDDING GUEST

Where art thou, Marko! thou our champion mighty?
 Though thou hast been the Sultan's vassal nam'd,
 Alway thou art our glory and our pride! 1800
 Make fast the saddle-girth on thy fam'd steed, Sharatz,
 From thy whole armoury no weapon take,

1783. Guerguelez is a hill in Buda, i.e. the older portion of the modern city of Budapest. The Serbians relate that, when the Turks conquered Buda in 1526, a Turk from Bosnia, by name Guerguelez Ali, mentioned often in the popular songs, jumped with his horse from this hill into the Danube and to death "to the health of the Sultan" (Vuk Karadzic)!

1798. *Vide* Introduction, "A Tale to be Chanted and Told," pp. 36-38.

1801. *Vide* note, pp. 199-200.

Saving thy heavy iron-knotted Club :
At Guerguez betwixt his shoulders aim good blow,
And let him have his hourias and his prophet! 1805

TRUTHISH WEDDING GUEST

And thou, Ilderim, Thunder of the Prophet !
Wast thou not satiate of the Cross and Christian folk
Through farspread lands from Morning unto Even?
Not space enough to ride thy winged horse?
Thy keen Damascus blade—could it not slake its
thirst? 1810
Most dreaded pupil thou of our Mahomet !
Yet must thou speed to hunt the kin of Fatima,
The best lov'd daughter of great Allah's Prophet !—
A sin was that, 'fore God and 'gainst the Prophet,
And he who so offends, he heavily must pay. 1815
But all thy sins, be they forgiven thee,
Since thou hast broken stubborn Bosnia's horns,

1806. Ilderim, i.e. "Lightning", was the name given to Sultan Bayazit I (1389-1403) because of his speed and strength.

1812. Fatima, the only child of Mahomet who survived her father; she was the fourth daughter of his wife Hadija and her father's favourite. He gave her in marriage to his brave and faithful nephew, Ali. The expression "Fatima's kin" here means the followers of Ali, Mahomet's son-in-law, with his wife Fatima—the so-called Shi'its (or Shiat-Ali) in Persia. The Shi'its are most numerous in Persia, they claim that Ali is the only true heir of Mahomet, and they do not like the other Mussulmans called Sunnites, e.g. Turks or Arabs. The dislike is mutual. Sultan Bayazit I never fought against the Persians. Perhaps the poet is alluding to the Battle of Angora in A.D. 1402, when Timor, the Mongolian potentate, defeated and captured Bayazit.

1815. The Prophet allowed Timor to conquer Bayazit.

1817. See line 22.

Since thou hast struck on head the Prophet's foes,
And only spar'd the common toil-worn herd
To do our will, and wail before the Cross! 1820

A MONTENEGRIN WEDDING GUEST

And thou, bold Obilitch, thou flaming Dragon,
All eyes were blinded which did look on thee!
Thy name heroic must most honour'd be!
For ne'er didst thou thy Sovereign Lord betray,
But set thy foot to stop proud Murat's way, 1825
When thou thy path didst thread unto his tent!—
On thy horse, Ždral, I see thee still,
Smiting a road through all the Turkish camp!
What man can smile away stern things which have
to be;
For Serb with Turk sure sooner would agree, 1830
Than would to sherbet turn the salt, salt sea!

A TURKISH WEDDING GUEST

Stay, Ali, stay! child of unwedded maid!
Kotari's girls are scatter'd far and wide;

1824-5. "Thou didst not as a coward allow the Turks to take our Empire without punishment"; the price was Murat's death.

1827. "Zhdrahl" is the Serbian word for "crane", and was the name of the horse of Milosh.

1832. There is a popular song relating how Ali Bojitchich carried off Kossa Smiljanitch (Vuk Karadjitch, *Narodne Pesme*, vol. iii, No. 26).

1833. Kotari is a district in Dalmatia surrounding the town of Zara. From this district of Dalmatia the Venetians obtained many soldiers and generals for their wars against the Turks.

It were a shame for such a falcon grey
 The partridge thus to hunt along the glade, 1835
 And still so long without a meal to bide!
 Strike, Talé, strike! Strike with thy knotted club,
 Which cracketh human ribs like hazelnuts!
 Though half of all thy men should lose their heads,
 Thou shouldst not give o'er Kossa to the giaours— 1840
 So fine a fruit is no dessert for Serbs!

A MONTENEGRIN GUEST

Fly, Komnené, warrior bold!
 Since thou hast captur'd such a prey,
 Thou hast enough repos'd thy wings,
 Nor is Kotàri far away! 1845
 Thine own sweet Haika likes thy faith,
 And would, maybe, become a Christian!
 Starina-Novak, haidouk brave!

1837. Talé is a Turkish hero frequently mentioned in Serbian popular poetry. He is called "Tale of Orashatz", which is a town in North-West Bosnia, or "Budalina Tale", i.e. "Silly Tale". At first sight he seemed to be foolish, but he was in truth "a good hero, a big quarreller, and a great joker". His usual weapon was a cornel stick "with a thousand iron nails".

1842-7. There is a popular song about Komnen (vocative case, Komnene), the standard-bearer and brother of Ivo of Senje (a little town in Dalmatia), relating how he carried off a Turkish girl Haika, a sister of Frzo Ibrahim of Udbina—another town in Dalmatia—in order to present her to his brother Ivo. But Ivo, when he heard how hardly she had been obtained, insisted that Komnen should marry her himself (*Vuk Karadzic*, vol. iii, No. 27).

1848. Starina Novak, or "Old Novak", the famous hero and haidouk, frequently mentioned in the popular songs, is called "old" because he became a haidouk in his old age. Different opinions are held as to the exact Pass where he dwelt.

Shout down the glen as is thy wont ;
 The Moslem's ears are closed with dirt, 1850
 Wake up the fleas upon his shirt.¹
 Now, Bayo, eye each living wight !
 Let no more guests arouse these hills,
 If thou or Limo deem not right !

(MOUSTAI-KADI *requests the lads to stop this kind of singing near the Montenegrins, lest some chieftains should be offended. They may, however, sing wedding songs, and he himself begins.*)

MOUSTAI-KADI

Weep not, Mother, pretty Fatima : 1855
 She is married, she's not buried ;
 From off her bough falls not this rose ;
 She dwelleth hence on fruitful ground !
 For Fatima will Soulyo guard
 As the dear apple of his eye. 1860

Fatima hath wondrous figure,
 And her eyes are like two stars ;
 Her countenance the ruddy morn ;
 Her garland hair crowns radiant brow ;
 Fits smallest coin her sweet-curv'd mouth, 1865
 And rose alone could colour such red lips ;
 Betwixt them greets the glance at whiles

1852. See line 1046.

1854. Limo was a celebrated captain of a band (or *haram-basha*).

¹ Literally, within his fur coat.



Photo]

H.M. Queen Marie of Yugoslavia, attired as a Montenegrin lady, at the Nyegosh Celebrations,
[V. Benchitch
September 1925

A bracelet row of snowy pearls !
 Her throat it is of ivory pure,
 So white her arms as wings of snow-white swan. 1870
 This Morning Star is pois'd above sweet flowers !
 O'er her life's waters move but silver oars,
 And blest the pillow that she rests upon !

MONTENEGRIN WEDDING GUEST

Falcons like not dusty fields ;
 Do falcons scour a marsh for frogs? 1875
 The falcon loves the rocky steeps,
 The falcon's eye the partridge doth spy out,—
 Some partridge light and timorous,
 Sharp-darting as quick fire !

TURKISH WEDDING GUEST

Waste not the hours, thou senior guest, 1880
 For hours to-day have equal worth to years ;
 The time to Soulyo will seem long !
 God in His kindness man's brief day hath given,
 That he may have some joy upon this earth,
 And it is sin to 'minish what God gives ! 1885

VOIVODA STANKO

Shameful is this ! A most wretched medley !
 Mark'd ye not well the fashion of their singing?
 'Tis of no use for foes to fraternize.
 Always must come allusions to past times :
 Milosh and Marko, Mouïo and Ali ! 1890

The storm doth gather slowly, then suddenly bursts
 forth,
 As seething water plays with kettle-lid !

VUK MANDUSHITCH

Why with the foe should fraternize men so?
 If they were fried upon one pan,
 The gravies would not mix together ! 1895

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Most impudent and dirty rascals
 With all indecency do us dishonour !
 If they did know the dignity of heroes,
 Could they be hangers-on to these vile Turks?
 To me more hateful they than Turks !— 1900
 But what care I for Turks or them?
 They challenge and defy the Turks,
 And yet, like dogs, do lick the Turkish dishes !

BOGDAN JURASHKOVITCH

They would ever sing just so,
 Unless that artful fox said No ! 1905
 See ye not that Kadi there?
 There's not his like upon the earth ;
 His mouth is full of honey'd words,
 Around the Cross he softly treads,
 But he is full of foulest cunning ; 1910
 A bitterer foe the Cross hath not,
 By Montenegrin gun let him be shot !

(THE WEDDING GUESTS depart. Soon afterwards a group of mourners¹ appear upon the horizon. At their head is THE SISTER OF BATRITCH, mourning for her brother.)

THE SISTER OF BATRITCH

Whither hast thou flown from me,
O falcon mine!

1913. O falcon mine: In S. Slav poetry *falcon* stands for *hero*, and is here used with more warmth of affection and admiration than could be conveyed by the ordinary term *junak*=hero.

1913-63. The Sister of Batritch sings in lamentation of her brother as she leads the group of mourners. (See lines 1366-72 as to the presentiment of the grandfather of Batritch.) Loud lamentations by women rather than men are an ancient custom among the Serbs. These dirges are again and again extemporized with spontaneous poetic feeling. Women let down their hair and sometimes scratch their face, piteously lamenting in the orchards and precincts of the house. The sympathetic reader will at once perceive that the "atmosphere" of these dirges has very little of the Occidental; the intensity of feeling and exuberance of expression are certainly quite "un-English". The peculiar genius of the Anglo-Saxon speech, moreover, is not so much allied to such passionate outpouring of grief; or one might better say, conversely, that the peculiar genius of the Serbo-Croatian speech renders possible the expression of such intensity of emotion and desperation of grief with a special beauty, intimacy, and tenderness. In the translation of this Lamentation care has been taken not to "Westernize" the original, but to preserve something of its tender, fresh, and concrete style. Several characteristic Lamentations from the rich storehouse of the Serbian popular poetry

¹ In Montenegro those who lament and mourn the dead are called *pokainitse*. These *pokainitse* include not only the nearer kinsfolk, but also more distant relatives and friends. The nearer kindred attend the funeral lamenting; other relatives and friends, if they cannot attend the funeral, come on the second or third day to mourn the deceased.

From all thy noble company,
 O brother mine!
 Didst thou not know the faithless Turk,—
 May God him curse! 1915
 Could never faithful be?
 Most lovely head!
 My world is gone now thou art gone,
 My sun! My brother!
 Never can my wounds be sooth'd,
 My smarting wounds!
 My very eyes are pluck'd from me,
 Light of mine eyes!
 To whom shall now go all thy brothers!
 O thou their pride! 1920
 And Pera grey, thy stricken sire?—
 Thy stricken sire!
 Young sisters three bereft of thee,—
 Each mourning thee!
 Bereft thy seven brothers' wives!
 O darken'd lives!
 Why throw thy handsome head away,
 Thou princely spirit!
 O'er thy head now gloats the foe!
 Our boast and pride! 1925

are to be found in *Serbian Songs and Poems: Chords of the Yugoslav Harp*, translated by the present writer and published by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, 1917 and 1918. The Sister's Lamentation in the poem now before the reader is the last heart-broken utterance of a young and passionate woman—passionate in the finer sense—a few moments before her self-inflicted death.

Cf. II Sam. i. 26. "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful" . . . (David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan).

'Gainst honour's word they hew'd thee down!

Most treach'rous brood!

Too well they garnish'd Travnik town!

God make them pay!

They deck'd it with thy lovely head!

My heart lies dead!

Round whom now will heroes gather?

Thou of men the leader!

Who now defend the far-flung wing?

Protecting wing!

1930

Who now keep count of Turkish heads?

Keen sword wast thou!

Hadst thou been slain in combat sharp

Thou warrior soul!

Where hot young heroes headlong ride

To glory's goal!

To take their toll of arms and men,

Thy death were priced!

Faith o'ermuch thou gav'st the faithless!

Thou loyal mind!

1935

Madness now creeps over me—

O'erwhelm'd in night!

Oh, might I everything forget!

My broken heart!

Thou wast ever wise in counsel,

My fair brother!

And couldst an Emperor well have serv'd!

With clearest mind!

Full well a Vizier hadst thou been!

My broken pride!

1940

Or hadst thou served before a king,

O ruler mine!

Thou wouldst have marshall'd bravest troops,
 Thou Rose of Mine!
 Oh, might we once more talk together,
 Heart of mine!
 Might I caress thy head so still!—
 No solace mine!
 Again to glance in thy dark eyes!
 Thou wert mine eyes! 1945
 Thy now cold head to kiss again,—
 As 'twere still part of thee!
 Again to tend thy wavy locks!
 It ne'er can be!
 Thy hero's turban could I wind!
 O day most blind!
 All-bloody hands round thee to find!
 But God requite!
 Thy lovely head is all despoil'd!—
 Arch-enemy! 1950
 Many a brother shalt thou greet!
 We hapless ones behind!
 Thou shalt find most knightly souls;
 But wretched me!
 Hoist upon the walls of Travnik!
 Deed accurst!
 Comrades' heads thou may'st not know!
 Oh, empty world!
 Insults heap'd upon us sorely!
 Oh, the Moslem foe! 1955
 Whither will thy heart's young love?
 Tears 'stead of sleep!
 And her two hapless children, weak,
 Orphan'd they and lone?

And grandsire Baiko, now grown old,
In Batritch clan?

Thy grandsire he did train thee well!
He'll mourn thee well!

Forgiveness o'er thy deadly wounds,
Batritch belov'd!

1960

The whelming woes of our whole race—
Not pardon'd these!

Our land falls under Islam's yoke!
Oh, judgment-stroke!

Our chiefs have now all heart of stone,—
Let death come to their home!

(*She kills herself.*¹)

(All the chieftains are weeping. On hearing the name of Batritch they all go forth to meet the mourners. As they come up to them, they learn what has happened. THE SISTER OF BATRITCH embraces her grandfather—KNEZ BAIKO—snatches his dagger from his girdle and with it kills herself. BAIKO swoons and falls before his lifeless grandchild.)

VUK TOMANOVITCH

In God's own name, what sorrow great
And unawaited falls on us to-day!

1965

(*None utter a word; all are weeping.*)

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

To God our cries ascend; He hears our centuries of
sighs!

Ruin doth strike us at the very head!

¹ "Lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."—The Old Test., II Sam. i. 23.

KNEZ ROGAN

Already I have eighty winters pass'd,
And many a time I carefully have scanned,
The Turks, the Latins, and the Montenegrins, 1970
But ne'er so fine a youth saw I from any land!

VUK TOMANOVITCH

Nowhere in all these lofty hills
Was bred a youth unto our Batritch rival;
He was in truth a very wingèd hero;
I've watched him leaping with his comrades : 1975
His standing jump was fourteen feet;
And running, he did twenty-four!
He'd clear three horses with one leap!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Why should one hide what really is?
Such a grey falcon ne'er before 1980
Did Montenegro bring to birth!
{Such balance of fine qualities:
{That he more handsome was than good,
Less kindly he than he was wise—
What one of us would dare to say?
Side by side six times were we, 1985
When powder blazed into our eyes,
And Death was hurtling all around:
Such iron brow I ne'er had seen;
No other youth so stood his ground,
And he was scarcely twenty-two! 1990
Wherefore hide it, Montenegrins!—
He's caught away my living heart,

VUK TOMANOVITCH

And all our country weepeth truest tears.
 He hardly had begun with life;
 Yet all his comrades on the field 1995
 To him first place were bound to yield;
 Turkish heads some seventeen
 He had taken in the wars!

VOIVODA BATRITCH

O God, that he should meet death thus!
 How could he ever trust the Turks; 2000
 Or e'er rely upon their honour?

VUK TOMANOVITCH

A hero he, who ever trusted men,
 That dog which men call Tchorovitch,
 On faith fraternal, tricked him to this folly,—
 The scoundrel Turk! his name be e'er accurst! 2005

SERDAR YANKO

Hath he not heir to follow him?

VUK TOMANOVITCH

Though heirs he hath, it profits not;
 He leaveth but two little boys;
 One to the other cannot pass a cup,—
 Yet as two golden apples lovely! 2010
 'Tis long to wait the upgrowth of the lads!

KNEZ YANKO

And he has left how many brothers?

VUK TOMANOVITCH

Seven brothers, brothers seven, all alike!

KNEZ YANKO

And say, will they avenge him, Vuk?

VUK TOMANOVITCH

Knez, they will, but to what profit? 2015

KNEZ YANKO

To what profit? say'st thou, man!
 Sure if they should well avenge him,
 'Twere resurrection from the grave!
 Alas, for this unhappy maid,
 Self-slain amongst us all this day, 2020
 For her my heart hath keener sorrow
 Than for the head of her unhappy brother!

SERDAR YANKO

Talk not, Knez, of our distress;
 There never was a grief like this
 In any place that I have known; 2025
 Her heart did break within her breast;
 The world for her was all o'erturned;
 Thinking of her falcon grey,
 She could not overcome her grief,
 So through dark death hath sought relief. 2030

2028. Falcon grey in Serbian poetry means a swift and valiant hero.

KNEZ ROGAN

Grieving so sore, what had she but to die!
 Sorrow like hers—it would have crushed a stone,
 Then how much more her gentle sister-heart!
 Too handsome he—that was his sole misfortune:
 When for some expedition he was dressed,— 2035
 When he had donn'd his ornaments and medals,
 Red silk aflame around his head,
 And locks luxuriant falling on his shoulders,
 With brace of pistols stuck in gayish girdle;
 His yatagan slung from the waist, 2040
 And in his hand his *jeferdar*;—
 With visage fine—tall as a lance—
 When thus I think on him as oft he came,
 My heart lights up in living flame!

(THE CHIEFTAINS *are seated on the big threshing-ground, and they talk, when there comes upon the scene three or four hundred OSRINITCHI, TZOUTZÉ, and BIELITZE. All take place before THE CHIEFTAINS, holding their rifles at the shoulder.*)

2037. The Montenegrins had, until the reign of Vladika Petar II, the author of the Poem, worn a fez with a shawl (or *sarouk*) twirled around it *à la* turban. The crimson pork-pie cap (or *kapa*) which the Montenegrins, female as well as male, wear has a broad border of black silk as a token of mourning for the Kossovo defeat; the crimson centre signifies the sea of blood with which the Black Mountain has been washed since then; and the five gold bands, which enclose in one corner the initials of the Prince ("H.I.", or Nicholas I) in Cyrillic characters, represent the five centuries of Montenegro's stormy history (see Miller, *The Balkans*, p. 363).

2041. *Jeferdar*: a long-barrelled flint gun, of rare workmanship. See, for instance, p. 220, lines 2797-2809.

SERDAR VOUKOTAR

Well are ye come! Say, what has happen'd,
brothers? 2045

Ye started out as if for war;
For war, indeed, was some necessity;
Was there not slaughter somewhere, in God's name?

A SOLDIER

Nay, Serdar, no slaughter yet hath been,
Although one feels it in the air. 2050

A SECOND SOLDIER

Priest of the Tzouté! give them now the letter,
Which thou didst write amongst us all,
And let them have a talk with it;—
Quieter business that, than talking all together!

(PRIEST MITCHO *gives the letter to VLADIKA DANILO,*
who looks at it without saying anything.)

KNEZ YANKO

What saith the letter? what's written, Vladiko? 2055

VLADIKA DANILO

In truth there is no reading of it!

(THE BISHOP *gives the letter to KNEZ YANKO, that*
he may hand it to THE PRIEST.)

KNEZ YANKO (*looking at it*)

A pretty letter! Plague on him who wrote it!

How nicely all is put upon the paper!
A cockerel's claw was surely pen for it!

*(All are laughing. KNEZ YANKO gives the letter to
THE PRIEST and speaks to him.)*

KNEZ YANKO

Here, Pop¹ Mitcho! Hold this letter! 2060
Read it, that we may know what's written.

*(PRIEST MITCHO takes the letter, looks at it a long
time, and then begins to read.)*

PRIEST MITCHO *(reading)*

Um . . . dam . . . am . . . bi . . . nu . . . no . . . na . . .
sha . . . ra . . .

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Reads he not nicely—keenly as a sword?
To-day's confabulation gives good fun!
Now—upon oath!—where didst thou learn to read?
Wast thou not at school in Venice? 2065
If thus thou read'st a letter that's thine own,
Good business wouldst thou make of one unknown!

PRIEST MITCHO

Vuk, 'twould seem thou'rt poking fun at me!
But as the teaching, so the reading:
If I had had a better master, 2070
I should have been a better reader—

¹ I.e. "priest."

Be that as it may, this all comes in my day,
And who can better, there's room enough to try!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

No offerings would I give to thee,
Were the business left to me—not a grain of wheat! 2075

PRIEST MITCHO

No wheat I get—not e'en a handful;
Sometimes a fleece or ball of cheese,
And that they seem to give perforce!
Are not our givers known to thee?

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

I' faith, I pray, do not be angry! 2080
But how dost manage with the service,
If such a letter gives thee sweat?

PRIEST MITCHO

To speak the truth, no Liturgy I read;
Nor do I need for service any sort of book;
Nor should I need to open it in church: 2085
I've learnt it all by heart quite well—
The Liturgy and Baptisms and Marriage,
And other things of not the same importance!
Thus when for things like these demand is made,
I can them all sing out like tuneful bird in glade. 2090

KNEZ YANKO

Of priests the wonder! May no ill befall him!
There's not his equal in the whole wide world.

(All are laughing and conversing.)

SERDAR VOUKOTA

Come on, any one of you, and tell us now a tale!
And after that let's go at once, before the night o'er-
takes us here!

ONE OF THE TZOUTZÉ

Enough have we to give fine stuff for tales:	2095
But hundred pardons e'en to Turkish swords—	
Harvest enough since Kossovo they've reaped!—	
Rather than that our story should prove true!	
Or six or seven years have ready gone,	
Since prophetess to us did come,	2100
From Antivari, it was said:	
She dealt in herbs for human healing;	
And wrote for people amulettes,	
To ward them from all gunshot harm.	
The people thought—God pardon them!—	2105
She had visions by God's Spirit!	
The Devil now has sent her unto us,	
Within the last three weeks or so,	
To do what she ne'er did before,—	
To point out witches 'mongst our women;—	2110

2098. "If this evil as to the witch is true, then it is a hundred times worse than all the evil wrought by Turkish sword."

2101. Bar or Antivari is a little town on the Adriatic coast.

Twenty or more she hath picked out,
 And counts herself amid their number!
 More than fifty heads already
 Have been eaten by these women—
 Heads of children who have died, 2115
 Or of men young, by rifle killed.
 Deeply moved are all our folk,
 Yet what to do no one doth show;
 Everyone now loathes his neighbour!
 For what to do no one doth know, 2120
 How mutual slaughter to prevent!
 By much persuasion come we here,
 With your help these wrongs to clear!

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Strange cattle these! Good riddance to them!
 For things like this they want to kill! 2125
 And where is this ill-starred old hag,
 Who 'midst you wields the bloody knife?

THE SAME TZOUTZA WARRIOR

Here is she; we have brought her here;
 Witness is she before you all;
 She says that she hath nought to hide, 2130
 And when she speaks (God grant her ruth!),
 You'd think her tale must all be truth!
 (*Enter THE WITCH-PROPHETESS.*)

KNEZ YANKO

Tell us, old mother, art thou witch?

SHE

Witch I am; why should I hide it?

KNEZ YANKO

And how dost thou perform thy arts? 2135

THE WITCH

We have a certain herb for this,
Which herb we cook within a pot;
With which in turn we all anoint,—
Upon which we are witches all! ¹

KNEZ YANKO

And after that, what do you do? 2140

THE WITCH

We meet on th' copper threshing-floor:
And we alone know where it is;
In March we ride on weaving-beams,

2136. When a witch wishes to fly away from her house to a gathering of her kindred, she anoints herself under the armpits with a special unguent, saying, "Let me catch neither thorn nor bough, but go straight on to trouble-stirring threshing-floor". There is another belief that it is also efficacious to take toad-gravy or mare's milk butter for use as unguent.

2141. The copper threshing-floor is held to be one of the usual meeting-places of the witches. The threshing-floor on which they gather is supposed to be of silver, if not of copper, and is called the trouble-stirring threshing-floor, or fairy threshing-floor.

2143. The witches gather riding on weaving-beams or brooms.

¹ I.e. observe the play on the words.

Together hold our secret councils,
 Decide on whom to work our ill. 2145
 Many a different form we take,
 And we row with silver oars ;
 Of fragile eggshell is our boat ;
 To one we hate no harm we do !
 But be he dear, or of our kin, 2150
 Then blot we out all trace of him.

THE TZOUTZÉ PEOPLE (*all together*)

Who says that she nothing knows?
 All that she hath said is true ;
 Why bring shame upon herself,
 Were she not member of this ring? 2155
 Now she's rueful ; mindful of her soul,
 For she pre-views us extirpated whole !

KNEZ YANKO

Listen, woman ! We do all believe thee !
 There may indeed be copper threshing-floor,
 And weaving-beams are big enough to ride ; 2160
 But egg-shell boats and oars of silver,—
 We're not the folk to credit that !
 { Silver oars for boats of shell—
 { I trow such craft would sink too well !

2148. Because it is supposed that the witches use egg-shell as water-craft, people are in the habit of smashing their egg-shells.

2149-51. It is a common idea that the witches do no harm to strangers, but only to members of their own family circle. Therefore the adage: "Where should a witch go, if not in her own kindred, to do her harm!"

THE WITCH

'Tis true, my dear, upon my soul!
 How dare I run beyond the truth, 2165
 When I have one foot in the grave?
 Place of repentance have I found;
 And I prefer to suffer stoning
 With all the others of my choir,
 Than still do ill, as we have done till now; 2170
 May it be easier for my soul!

(She weeps.)

KNEZ YANKO

An evil sprite possesses her;
 In God's name, brethren, be there witches?

KNEZ ROGAN

Aye, hornèd witches are there, Knez!—
 Who from a cloud can even shoot an eagle. 2175

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH (*to* THE BISHOP)

Thou 'rt learnèd, Bishop, very deep in books;
 Is mention made therein of witches?

VLADIKA DANILO

Thou askest as to witches, Vuk?
 One never reads of them in books!
 True hands upon me place, and swear 2180
 Old wives' tales and lore, all this!
 As for this hag, she telleth lies,—
 Yet witch indeed she well might be!

ALL THE CHIEFTAINS

Baba, say, why thou hast lied—
 Or on our soul thy stoning be! 2185
 'Tis not a joke what thou hast done;
 Discord brought 'mongst three whole tribes,
 And unsheathed too the sword among them!
 (THE WITCH *is frightened and trembles.*)

THE WITCH

Though I will tell, that should be in confession,
 Then do with me whate'er ye will. 2190

KNEZ YANKO

Woman! there is here no priest,—
 Unless we send to thee Priest Mitcho!
 Of books he has not one by him!
 Out with the truth, or stoning waits thee;
 Believe me, only such thy fate can be! 2195

THE WITCH (*with trembling voice*)

When I set out from Antivàri,
 A kavaz from the Pasha came,
 Ay, kavaz unto me did come,
 And took me to the Vizier, at Scutàri.
 Of all that was afoot he had well heard, 2200
 How ye took counsel 'mong yourselves,
 Attack to make on Renegades amongst you;
 So me he sent to sow discord between you,

2185. *Baba*: old woman.

2187. The three tribes in mind are the Tsoutsé, Biclitsé, and Ozrinitch.

That ye might busied be with your own ills.
From him I learnt what I must do: 2205

He said to me (a curse upon his soul !):
"Suspicion will not on thee fall,
"Since thou art daily in and out among them."

And threaten'd me as I did leave him:

{ "Woman, if thou stirr'st not up
"These Montenegrins, I do surely swear 2210

"On solemn oath of faithful Moslem,
"Thy little children ten at home,
"And thy three sons who married be,
"I'll lock them up within thy dwelling,
"And burn them all—true, burn them living!"— 2215

This threat it was that urged me on

Discord to sow 'mid Montenegrins!

(All the people jump up, take stones to stone the woman, but THE CHIEFTAINS will not permit it, though defending her with difficulty. Everybody disperses homewards, save some of THE CHIEFTAINS, who remain to confirm their decision.)

(Night-time. CHIEFTAINS sitting round the fire. A blood-red moon and earthquake. Blind Old ABBOT STEPHEN comes to them, rosary in hand.)

KNEZ ROGAN

What meaneth, Father Abbot,
The quaking of these hills?

THE ABBOT

Who, my son, can know the mysteries of God's will, 2220
Who insight hath His wonders all to fathom?

KNEZ ROGAN

Canst thou not say why is this moon so red,
As though some mighty hand had heated it in fire?

THE ABBOT

Not this, my son, can I to thee explain;
Of heavenly garments God hath store enough, 2225
And He doth give to each as is His will;
But unto me or Sun or Moon are just the same,
Since from mine eyes is fled the light of day!
Blest be your eyes that can these wonders see,
So you His truer worshippers may be! 2230
(Tranquillity ; THE ABBOT counts his beads.)

KNEZ YANKO

And dost thou alway, Abbot, count thy beads?

THE ABBOT

I do, my son, nor do I ever cease!

KNEZ YANKO

Thou shouldst have had enough of counting;
E'en to thy sightless eyes, it must o'er weary be!
Rather than that . . . 2235
Why, give to me a rosary of nuts,—
That I may count them once, as is our way—
In preference to a hundred of these pearls,—
So I could use my fingers to good end!

SERDAR YANKO

Of all things, Knez, thou makest sport and joke!— 2240
 Come, Father, now, as thou dost know so well,
 In God's good name some story to us tell,
 Ere, having laid us down, we fall asleep!
 Who words from thee hath never heard,
 Knows not what lies asleep within thy soul. 2245

THE ABBOT

I will, my brothers; 'tis just for that I'm come!
 How many a twinkling light have I fir'd up,
 On altar of our Church—the "Right Believing"!
 And as a blind old man I come to you
 To brighten still, so much as in me lies, 2250
 These holy fires of yours upon your altar,
 Upon the altar of your Church and Honour.

*(Many cry out together: "Speak, father, we all will
 listen howsomuch thou wilt, even until midnight.")*

ABBOT STEPHEN

Of life I now can count full eighty years:
 Since I did lose the sight of this world's light,
 I dwell the more within the spirit realm,— 2255
 Although this body still holds back the soul,
 Within her darksome casket lock'd and hidden,
 As flame doth burn in dark and earthy cavern.
 Full many a far-off land have I beheld,
 And the most sacred churches of our God, 2260
 Which Earth responsively hath rais'd to Heaven:
 I have look'd o'er them all; seen each in turn;

And oft enjoy'd the altar's sweet perfume.
 I have ascended too Olivet's holy mount,
 Where Christ once gave the warning and predic-
 tion 2265

Of all that soon must come on His doom'd City.
 I have seen too those sacred grottoes three,
 Where the Eternal Light did take on flesh,
 And Heaven's own King did sanctify a manger,
 And where the Three Wise Men came to the Child, 2270
 To offering make of all their gifts most rare.

Gethsemane's dark garden I have seen,—
 Forgotten ne'er through suffering and through sin!—
 A wind most mad hath nigh put out that Light!—
 One now beholds upon those fields so rich 2275
 A hateful growth of thorns and briars,
 And Omar's fane hath uprais'd high its head
 On sacred stones that Solomon laid down;—

2265. A reference, of course, to the Olivet discourse and Our Lord's prophecy as to the destruction of Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospels.

2267. The poet refers to three caves, the first where the Eternal Light was of frail woman born, the second where the Blessed Mother laid Him in the manger, and the third where the Holy Child was worshipped by the three Wise Men. There is, however, in point of fact only one cave in which all three events took place. Above it are three monasteries and a large church, the cave being under the main altar of the church.

2272. At the present day that sacred spot, Gethsemane, is a garden with some very old olive trees, kept by the Franciscan Order.

2274. "Wild wind" is a poetical expression for Islam.

2277. Mohammed II, successor of Omar I (634-44), was in power when the Arabs conquered Jerusalem (A.D. 637), and built on the hill Moriah the now famous mosque of Omar, where had been the temple of Solomon.

A stable now is Holy Wisdom's Shrine!

Strange are the changes in all earthly things; 2280
 How mark'd they are by most capricious whim:
 The whole wide round of Nature feeds upon
 The milk all-nourishing of Mother Sun;
 Yet wantonly those rays strike hapless head,
 And burn to-day whom yesterday they fed! 2285
 Not every river is it that hath bed,
 Where its onsurging waters free may flow:
 We all have seen that terrifying sight,
 Waters in flood, to devastate and blight!

Our lot on earth, and what our destin'd goal— 2290
 Two sphinx-like faces which we try to read:
 Where seems Disorder, Wisdom all profound?
 What are the children, what fathers of man's dreams?
 That we call "Real", is it "Appearance" mere?
 Are these all mysteries Man can never sound? 2295
 That which to man "appears"—is that the "Real",
 Or are we simply trick'd by our own eyes?

This world of ours awakes the human will,
 And duty is not done apart from thought;
 Nor can our life proceed without defence: 2300

2279. Mohammed II, after he had conquered Constantinople, entered on horseback the Church of Holy Wisdom (i.e. Hagia Sophia, called in the streets of Constantinople at the present day "Aya Sophia"), the Cathedral of Constantinople.

2290-7. These seven lines are regarded by all the poet's countrymen as a difficult passage. The lines have been the subject of much controversy. It is hoped that the rendering here given is, at least, not less clear than the original.

2298-307. The two great phrases of Darwin, "The Struggle for Existence" and "The Survival of the Fittest", here find anticipatory expression.

Nature herself doth ever furnish arms—
 Defence against a force that may break loose ;
 Arms to supply a lack, arms to resist attack ;—
 The very corn is spiked for self-defence,
 And thorns do punish plucking of a rose ; 2305
 Nature hath sharpen'd myriads of teeth,
 And pointed too how many myriad horns !
 Yet bark and shell and wing and speed of feet,
 And all this vast array of things confus'd
 Hath yet some rhythmic Harmony and Law : 2310
 O'er all this curious mixture of a world
 There yet doth reign one over-arching Mind,
 Which shall not suffer ill to dominate,
 Put out the threatening spark and strike the serpent's
 head.

The Man defender is of Wife and Child ; 2315
 Altar and Hearth a People must safeguard,
 And Honour is a Nation's sacred charge !
 Each generation must its burden bear,
 New needs call forth from man new powers ;
 'Tis in such struggle Genius is forged. 2320
 The Oppress'd do rise against th' Oppressor :
 The stroke calls forth a flash from out the stone ;
 Lacking that stroke, imprison'd still the spark !
 Suffering reveals the virtue of the Cross,

2318–20. These lines bring to mind those by James Russell Lowell written later:—

"New occasions teach new duties,
 Time makes ancient good uncouth,
 They must upward still and onward,
 Who would keep abreast of truth."

And fiery trial doth temper well the soul;— 2325
 Subtle force electric through the body;
 Through Hope man's spirit findeth bonds with Heaven,
 E'en as the Sun's rays draw earth's dew above.

“What is Man?” 'tis his to be a *Man*!
 Small creature he, and by the Earth deceiv'd, 2330
 While Earth herself is not for ever his.
 Is not the Real more puzzling than the Dream?
 When man on Earth doth merit name of Honour,
 He hath had right to start as pilgrim here,
 Missing such name, how deep his fall may be! 2335
 O generation mine, created to be sung!
 From Age to Age shall muses vie
 To bring thee wreaths that cannot die;
 What ye by deeds proclaim shall poets teach,
 In songs that shall be sung down deathless years. 2340
 O generation mine, most dread is thine ordeal!
 One part of thee all renegade hath been,
 And pervert is become to Mammon,

2327. This beautiful line recalls the remark of the Apostle:
 “Hope we have as an anchor of the soul.”

2329. Man is not created for this earth alone, but for a
 better world, and although he must live on it and be a man,
 he is nevertheless a weak being, liable to be deceived by earthly
 things, and not finding therein his heart's desires; thus is he led
 to see that this earth is not his final goal—that here he has “no
 continuing city”.

2332. Compare these lines with line 4 in the Dedication of
 our Author's almost equally famous (philosophical) poem entitled
The Light of the Microcosm. There he depicts the human life as a
 dreadful dream, and later on, in line 74, he says, “A heavy dream
 oppresses man”—a dream wherein he sees fearful apparitions,
 and he becomes conscious that his being belongs not to them.

2343. The poet here uses the expression “Mammon” for Islam.

Sure Nemesis already on it falls,
 For what is Bosnia? What Albania's half?— 2345
 If slaves to Islam brothers of your blood?
 United all, there's toil enough for you:
 It is your lot and call to bear the Cross,
 Alike to strive with brethren and with strangers.
 The thorny crown is sharp, sweet after be the fruit! 2350
 Except by way of death was never resurrection.

E'en now I see thee 'neath thy glistening shroud:
 Honour and Hope shall both resurgent be:
 There, where the Altar looks unto the East,
 There, where doth burn Christ's fragrant incense
 free, 2355

There die glorious death, since die once thou must!
 Wounded honour fires the valiant breast:
 It cannot feebly linger or stay sick!—
 The sorrows of our Altar—long blasphem'd in rage—
 The kindly hand of Heaven shall at last assuage. 2360
*(All fall asleep. The blind ABBOT stays by the fire
 alone, counting his beads, and praying all night
 amongst them.)*

*(Daybreak. They rise and gird their arms to start for home.
 They marvel to see the aged ABBOT still seated by the
 fire and talking in a low voice, counting his pearls and
 moving his lips in prayer. Arising, they come to him
 and kiss his hand with reverence, remembering his wise
 and beautiful words.)*

SERDAR IVAN

Abbot, thou art not blind!

For thou art lit with Wisdom's gracious ray!
 'Tis fools are blind, though they have eyes to see;
 Have eyes to see, yet without insight stare;
 Make use of them for bare necessity, 2365
 Like to some creatures of a lower breed!

SERDAR VOUKOTA

O Serdar Nyégosh, tell me, dost thou think
 That, having eyes, he would be as he is?
 A lovely song doth sleep within the blind,
 For oft impedeth sight both speech and mind. 2370
 Thou couldst begin a story to relate,—
 On some great theme, I care not how sublime—
 When 'fore thine eye comes some intrusive thing,
 Taking from thy discourse its savour and its force;
 The mind o'erclouds, and tangled is the tongue; 2375
 And so is lost what fain thou wouldest say;
 Whereas the blind, they are not hindered by
 This outward eye; they quietly do pass on,
 As men in cups do hold the hedge along.

VOIVODA BATRITCH

Our dreams let's tell as we proceed! 2380
 I've seen in dream what I ne'er saw before,
 And omen good it may be for my arms!
 This night in vision I saw Obilitch,
 As he flew o'er Cetinje's plain,
 On his white horse—a vila were not swifter!— 2385
 What vision splendid only God doth know!

2385. *Vila*, a woodland nymph or mountain forest fairy.

(Thirty or forty friends relate their dreams. All of them tell how they, like VOIVODA BATRITCH, have seen Milosh Obilitch in their dream. They all go gaily towards the church, to swear together to fight against the Turks of their own country. They are entering the church when VUK MITCHUNOVITCH unwinds the "shahl" (or head-cloth) from his head. The cloth is very long, each one takes hold of it, and they form a circle.)

VLADIKA DANILO

How, now! Nicholas, Knez of Doupilò!
 Puttest thou forth thy hand to swear the oath?
 Thou art not strong, thou know'st, in Tzrmnitza,
 Which lieth near the threshold of the Turks: 2390
 Load not thine house with weight of oath unkept;
 For it is strife indeed to strive with God!

KNEZ NICHOLAS

{ Let it be known to thee, O Bishop!
 { And unto ye, O Montenegrins all:
 Full well I know how things do go at home;
 Three hundred men of Doupilò there are— 2395
 And let them all betray me if they will,
 I swear to you, by my firm faith in God,
 That we must fight the Turks unto the death,
 E'en though all trace of us be blotted out!

2389. Between Tzrmnitza and Scutari were no forests to make Turkish incursions difficult; consequently in Tzrmnitza were very many renegades.

When for my faith I do outpour my blood, 2400
 No fear have I 'bout oaths or aught beside!
 As soon as gun-shot lights on Cetinje,
 With thund'rous echoes shall the hills resound;
 Then happy he whose heart is true and sound,
 And he who shall be yet not over-old; 2405
 Business enough, in truth, shall he behold!

SERDAR YANKO

Betray each other will we never; but we must bind
 ourselves by oath; it will be sounder business.

VUK MITCHUNOVITCH

Administer the form of oath, Serdar Vukota, for thou
 dost know it best, and we will all cry out, "Amen!"

SERDAR VOUKOTA

Keep well in mind, O Montenegrins,
 Who shall be strong in deeds he shall be best!
 Who basely shall betray our leader,
 Let each created thing to him be stone! 2410
 May mighty God by His great power
 Change all the seed placed in his fields to stone,
 Change, too, the forming babe in womb to stone,
 Or let his progeny be lepers!—
 Then shall the people point at them with finger! 2415
 Let every meanest trace of him be blotted out,—
 E'en as we find no more a horse like to King Marko's!

2417. Sharatz, the horse of Kralyevitch Marko, is said by the Serbs to have been a sort of dappled roan, or "multi-

Let ne'er within his room a rifle more be slung,
Nor any man of all his house e'er die on honour's
field!

For manly head his kin shall vainly yearn! 2420

Brothers, who plays false unto these heroes,
Heroes who 'gainst our foe the first stroke strike,
The shame of Brankovitch shall fall upon him,
For him our holy Fast be but affair for dogs,
And let his tomb be grounded deep in hell! 2425

Brothers, he who is false unto these heroes,
Nor Slava-wine nor consecrated bread shall e'er be
his!

No Christian hope for him! a dog's creed be for him!
Let blood be poured out in place of wine

Upon his Yuletide log!
Let all the joy and pleasaunce of his Slava Day
In grief consume away! 2430

Let him eat not of lamb, but his own kin
Upon his festal day!

Let wind of madness whirl him far astray
From Wisdom's pleasant way!

Brothers, he who is false unto these heroes,
May dirt and rust and squalor e'er possess his
house! 2435

coloured", as is often seen in cattle. These horses are very rarely seen in Montenegro. Sharatz was said to be waiting with his master in a cave for the hour of Serbian deliverance. Sharatz was not a handsome steed, but very sturdy. Marko had discovered his strength by pulling his tail: all the horses he had previously tested in this way he had been able to throw from him easily, but not so was it with Sharatz, although he was only a three-year-old.

Behind his stiff, cold body, and behind
The corpses of his kinsfolk, may there follow
Mourners untrue and hearts all insincere,
Telling their lies away!

*(All together cry, "Amen!" Leaving the church, they
make for home.)*

*(Christmas Eve. VLADIKA DANILO and ABBOT STEPHEN
are sitting by the fire. YOUNG MONASTIC STUDENTS
are playing merrily around the house, and they place the
logs upon the Christmas fire.)*

ABBOT STEPHEN

Have ye, my boys, put on the logs cross-wise
As sacred usage asketh us to do?

THE STUDENTS

Father rever'd, the logs are placed cross-wise, 2440
On them we've handfuls thrown of finest wheat,
And we have sprinkled them with ruby wine!

ABBOT STEPHEN

Now give me, lads, a glass of red, red wine,
Of wine the very best in cup the biggest,
And I, a father old, will richly drink
Unto this Christmas-time! 2445
*(They give THE ABBOT a large goblet of wine; he
gives the Christmas toast and drinks the wine.)*

2438. For note on Christmas in Montenegro see Appendix B.
Note.—The reader is reminded that the line-numbering is according
to the original Poem.

ABBOT STEPHEN (*wiping his moustache*)

God's blessing on this joyous Feast!
 Now bring me, boys, the gouslé,—
 My soul doth long to hear its strains—
 { For I would sing some little while;
 { 'Tis many a day since I have sung;
 Regard it not, O God, as sin; 2450
 For I am old, and with the years the habit grew!
 (THE STUDENT YOUTHS *hand him the gouslé.*)

ABBOT STEPHEN (*singing to the gouslë*)

{ Would any man enjoy the day,
 { Then surely he must taste its light;
 { He who would make a merry feast,
 { Must also know what Yuletide means!

In Bethl'em Yuletide I have kept,
 And in Mount Athos Christmas I have kept, 2455
 In Holy Kieff, too, Noël I've kept;
 But quite apart this Yuletide stands

2455. Mount Athos, a formation on a narrow peninsula jutting into the Ægean Sea. It is the seat of sacred learning of the Serbian National Church. There are some twenty monasteries on the Mount—Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, Serbian—the monastery of *Hilendar* being for the Serbs the most famous and sacred name. The whole group of monasteries forms a kind of ecclesiastical republic. The site is one of the most beautiful in the whole of the Balkans.

† 2456. Holy Kieff: the religious centre of the Russian people. Here is one of the oldest monasteries in Russia, by name *Petcher*. The sacred town is much visited by pilgrims. It was the capital of Old Russia from the IXth to the XIIIth Century, when it was taken by the Tartars.

For merriment and good simplicity.

The hearth's bright flame burns best of all the year,
 The straw is spread upon the household floor, 2460
 While crosswise flame the logs on cheery fire;
 The rifles crack, and roasts on spits do turn,
 The kolo sings; they strike the gouslé's chord;
 Grandchildren with their grandsires play,
 Join in the kolo—generations three!— 2465
 And yet they dance with perfect harmony,
 Equal all in this bright mirth and gaiety,
 And that which pleaseth me 'bove all is this:
 To toast all round—a general health to call!

VLADIKA DANILO

Is it not well, good Abbot Stephen, 2470
 That thou art blest with mirthful disposition?

ABBOT STEPHEN

Young son of mine, and goodly Bishop,
 This night is gay for all the world;
 My soul is gladden'd by the ruby drop,
 My time-worn soul, it dances o'er the wine, 2475
 As o'er good brandy leaps the licking flame.
 Life wakes within my aged bones,
 And brings to mind the days of youth!

2476. *Raki*, a Turkish word for a special Serbian production—a kind of brandy, obtained from prunes or the pressed residue of grapes. When heated it burns with a pale-blue flame. Warmed and mixed with honey or sugar, it is used as a winter cordial.

VLADIK A DANILO

What is there jollier in the world
 Than countenance of radiant mirth, 2480
 Above all when that face is thine!—
 With silvery beard down to the waist,
 And silver locks upon thy shoulder,
 And brow so clear, without a wrinkle—
 All blessings surely from our God Most High! 2485

ABBOT STEPHEN

Through sieve I've passed and colander,
 And much inquir'd into this weary world;
 Drunk to the noxious dregs its poison cup.
 And made acquaintance with life's bitterness;
 With all that is, with all that still can be. 2490
 To my experience is there nothing strange,
 For come what may, I am not unprepared!
 All trials and ills of every kind
 Are to man dowry in this world.
 Youth is still thine and small experience: 2495
 The first drops of a poisonous cup
 Are the most bitter and most hard to drink;
 Oh, that thou knewest what awaiteth thee!
 Unto the Tyrant, tyrant is this world;
 Unto a noble soul much greater tyrant! 2500
 This world's a complex of discords infernal,
 Where strives the flesh with soul,
 Where strives the sea 'gainst rockbound coast,
 Where striveth heat with cold,
 Where striveth wind with wind, 2505

Where creature strives with creature,
 Where nation strives with nation,
 Where man doth strive with man,
 Where striveth day 'gainst night,
 Where spirits dark do strive against the light; 2510
 Where bodies groan beneath the spirit's power;
 The soul attains not equipoise in flesh;
 Under the vault of heaven unresting sighs the sea,
 O'er which there spy cloud-navies of the sky;
 Without surcease wild wave doth toss at wave, 2515
 Yet both are broken on the rocky shore!
 No one is happy, and no one content;
 No one hath quiet, and no one hath calm;
 Man laugheth scornfully at man;
 And yet his fellow ape is mirror of himself! 2520

VLADIKA DANILO

Good fire is here, but better still the wine;
 Thou hast a little warmed thyself, my Sire,
 And thy philosophy dost sift the world!

ABBOT STEPHEN

Where hast thou been, i' faith, to-day,
 That thou art come so late at home? 2525
 Upon the chase so long thou hast not roam'd,
 Earlier from hunting ever dost thou come,
 And, tell me, where may be thy body-guard?—
 Thy flagman, Pima, and the Novak twain?

2511. Compare Holy Scripture: Epistle to Romans, viii. 22-26.

2529. The flagman, Pima, came from Doupilo, and Novak from Velestovo.

It were not well they should be far away: 2530
 Till Christmas over, better close to thee,
 These sons of aged Martin,—two or three;
 For I have always fear for thee, my boy,
 That somewhere by the Turks thou slain mayst be:
 Should five-and-twenty thee this night attack,— 2535
 Mind thee how lone and isolate thy house!—
 They could do what they would—could burn and slay
 and sack!

VLADIKA DANILO

Grandsire, fear not for me, by God's good will!
 The Turks just now are thinking not of this;
 It is with evil thoughts they have to fight! 2540
 But even should there come five score of them,
 I have by me a group of students ten;
 Into the house we'd go; ourselves entrench therein;
 To us would fall the fighting;—thou the while wouldst
 sing!

ABBOT STEPHEN

Save me, O God, from such a song! 2545
 It would come harder to me than to weep—
 Weeping is song with tears!

*(They go off to rest. Before dawn they go to church;
 service over, they leave the church. In front of the
 church, A PUPIL relates something to THE ABBOT.)*

THE PUPIL

Grandsire, give ear, while unto thee I speak!
 When the first bells rang out at dawn

I rose from sleep to go into the church,— 2550
 When lo! from somewhere I did hear an echo,
 And hasten'd to the green marge of the field;
 Although the dawn was wondrous fresh and fair,
 It seem'd that water plung'd to some abyss.
 When I sate down a space, beside the field, 2555
 The sound, it was not what I thought;
 Resounding echoes came from hill and vale,
 Echoes that seem'd to rend the clouds apart;
 Rifles did thunder, skies were rent in twain,
 While warriors young all furiously did shout. 2560
 Then I at better speed hied o'er the plain;
 But as I came to Djinov hill
 Nought I anywhere could find
 Though stiff fight was somewhere raging,
 Whereof the hills gave echo back as answer. 2565

ABBOT STEPHEN

{ Hold thy tongue, thou silly boy!
 { Bethink thyself; is it not Christmas morn?
 Have not already three cocks sung;
 And Yuletide shooting 's in full swing,
 Now too the hillside, like a pumpkin empty,
 Resounds with noises everywhere; 2570
 Just now it serves for nothing else
 Than to give back each single sound it hears,
 Like that gay bird men bring from overseas!

2562. Djinov hill lies south-east of Cetinje field.

2573. I.e. the parrot.

THE STUDENT

Sire, by Christ's Birth, it surely is not so!
Slaughter there is, and bloody slaughter too; 2575
For one whole hour I joyously have heard it.
Black smoke is curling over Baiitzé,—
Thick as the thickest autumn fog!

ABBOT STEPHEN

Go to, go to! Thou hast an old wives' tale!
Smoke curls at Yuletide, is that any wonder!— 2580
Were a whole people being sacrificed,
That could not be without great clouds of smoke!

(Gun-shots are heard below. VLADIKA DANILO jumps on his horse and rides off, and, lo! down the field are five or six hundred men; he spurs on his horse to reach them. On his arrival they gather round him. THE VLADIKA, seeing five of the Martino-vitch family, VUK BORILOVITCH, and three of his servants blood-sprinkled, begins to question them.)

VLADIKA DANILO

Relate me now! Say what hath taken place;
What kind of men are ye—or wolves or foxes?

VOIVODA BATRITCH

The news is nought but good, my lord! 2585
We bow the knee to God and to the Holy Child!
But first of all we give thee Christmas Greetings,
To thee and to all Montenegro!
We brothers five of clan Martinovitch,

And servants three of thine—most trusty three— 2590
 With Borilovitch-Vuk, the falcon-hearted,
 Did last night fall a-fighting with the Turks.
 All those who heard ran fast unto our help ;
 As quick as water fighters ran together ;—
 But why do I spin out the story?— 2595
 Though broad enough Cetinje's Plain,
 No single seeing eye, no tongue of Turk,
 Escap'd to tell his tale another day !
 We put them all unto the sword,
 All those who would not be baptiz'd ; 2600
 But who paid homage to the Holy Child
 Were all baptiz'd with sign of Christian Cross,
 And as brother each was hail'd and greeted.
 We put to fire the Turkish houses,
 That there might be nor stick nor trace 2605
 Of these true servants of the Devil !
 From Cetinje to Tcheklitche we hied,
 There in full flight the Turks espied ;
 A certain number were by us mow'd down,
 And all their houses we did set ablaze ; 2610
 Of all their mosques both great and small
 We left but one accursèd heap,
 For passing folk to cast their glance of scorn.

VLADIKA DANILO

Great gladness this for me, my falcons,
 Great joy for me ! Heroic liberty 2615

2614. *My falcons* : vide note, p. 74.

Has resurrection morn to-day,
From every tomb of our ancestors dear !

(THE VLADIKA dismounts and embraces the heroes who began the struggle with the Turks, and they go together down the field, singing and firing off their rifles in sheer overflow of good spirits. When they come up to the church ABBOT STEPHEN is there at the door with another monk, who holds in hand the Cup of Holy Communion.)

ABBOT STEPHEN

Though I see not, good enough's my hearing.
Brethren, come in and take the Holy Meal,
From fasting and confession I absolve— 2620
I with my soul will answer for it all.

(Those who had not eaten that morning draw near and take the Holy Communion ; after the Sacrament, they put the roasts upon the spits and begin to dance the kolo. THE VLADIKA comes into the house, along with the five Martinovitch brothers, also VUK BORILOVITCH and his three faithful servants. They turn the spits, the youths play various games, and THE KOLO sings.)

THE KOLO

Black clouds had veil'd our kindly sun ;
Upon our hills had darkness come ;
Before our Altar flicker'd faint the lamp,
And broken every gouslé's tuneful string. 2625
The woodland nymphs had hidden in dark caves,
In fear and dread of either moon or sun.

In many a breast was aspiration fled,
 Brave hearts were mourning Liberty as dead—
 Gone as the sun's red glow forsakes the mountain crest,
 Or sinks beneath dark waves far down the west! 2630

Dear God, what solemn festival!
 All beatific souls of our ancestors dear
 Shall joyous vigil hold o'er Cettigné to-day,
 And celebrate high carnival in shining clouds; 2635
 Pois'd in the azure, like to snow-white swans,
 When under cloudless skies they proudly sail
 On gently-heaving bosom of blue lake.

The five Martinovitch, those falcons five—
 At one maternal breast all fondly nourish'd, 2640
 All lull'd to sleep by the same cradle songs—
 The Novak twin, with Pimo, their flag-bearer,
 And Vuk-Borilovitch, the valiant knight,—
 All ye who first did set upon the Turks!
 Who shall ye wreath fair garland crowns?— 2645
 Memorial to these lustrous deeds
 Be Montenegro's Liberty!

(ABBOT STEPHEN goes amongst the people, two lads
 bearing behind him a large dish, on which is
 20 okas of prepared wheat, with which is seasoning
 of pomegranate seed, and wine and honey. The
 people are astonished, make a circle round him, and
 watch what he will do. The lads place the cooked
 wheat¹ in the middle of the big threshing-floor, and
 THE ABBOT begins to speak.)

¹ The wheat which the lads place in the middle of the big threshing-floor is, of course, the cooked wheat brought as offering to the souls of the dead.

ABBOT STEPHEN

Listen people, and take off your caps,
 Memorial service I now hold
 For all our valiant knightly souls ; 2650
 To-day to them shall be most sweet,
 Since Kossovo not such a day!

(They all take off their caps with mirth and laughter.)

ABBOT STEPHEN *(repeating by heart)*

Thy mercy, Lord, upon Thy servants true ;
 Rulers o'er men, but yet Thy bondslaves too :
 Young Dushan, the Invincible, 2655
 Obilitch, George Kastriotitch,
 Zrinovitch, Ivan, Milan ;
 Strahinitch and wingèd Rélia ;
 Ivan-beg Tsrnoyevitch and Urosh ;
 Smilianitch and Voivoda Momtchil ; 2660

2655. One of the best-known streets of pre-war Belgrade bore the name of Dushan, just as a favourite residential crescent was given the name of Obilitch. A very popular Choral Society in the capital is also named after Obilitch.

2657. Zrinovitch, i.e. Nicola Zrinski, killed fighting against the Turks in defence of Siget (A.D. 1566). One of the most famous Croatian heroes. Ivan and Milan, see note on line 219.

2658. Strahinitch Ban, a favourite hero of Serbian popular songs. In Belgrade a well-known street is named after him. Perhaps the most beautiful of the Serbian popular songs is that describing the fight of the Ban with the Turk, Vlah Ali, who burnt his palace and carried off his wife. Relia—"winged Relia"—is supposed to have had wings; he was pobratim of Kralyevitch Marko and is a familiar figure of the national songs.

2659. For note on the brothers Tsrnoyevitchi see lines 567 and 573. A street in Belgrade is named after Urosh.

2660. Smilianitch, a famous hero in the fights against the Turks in the XVIIth Century. In Belgrade a familiar thoroughfare bears his name.

Yankovitch and the nine Yougovitch;
 And Novak, too, for sake of his attack,
 And all our other valiant knights!
 In heaven may their souls now reign,
 As upon earth their names still rule! 2665

*(They eat of the festive wheat-honeycake, take a meal,
 and depart each one for his own house.)*

*(New Year. After leaving the church, they are seated around
 the fire, THE ABBOT being rather thoughtful.)*

VLADIKA DANILO

Father, thou art sunk in thought;
 Or maybe thou wouldst take a nap?

ABBOT STEPHEN

I am not drowsy, but in thoughtful mood:
 I wonder me concerning this "New Year",
 And why to-day it should upon us fall? 2670
 Why should "New Year" not be with new first buds

2660. Voivoda Momtchil was the brother of Jevrosima, the mother of Marko Kralyevitch. His fort was Pirlitor, by Durmitor, one of the highest mountains of Montenegro. He was killed by King Voukashin.

2661. Yankovitch, a good friend of Smilianitch. The nine Yougovitch are the nine brothers of Tsaritsa Militsa, consort of Knez Lazar. They, along with their old father, Jug Bogdan (Jug pronounced *Youg*) were all slain on the field of Kossovo (June 28, 1389).

2662. Novak, see lines 1848-9.

2665. "As upon earth their names still rule." Even in the year 1929 all the names mentioned in these ten lines are heard upon people's lips, in some connection or other, every day of the year.

Of Spring, when comes again from south the sun,
And day begins to make advance on night;
When all the earth doth don her garb of green,
When Mother Nature makes her garments clean, 2675
And every thing in Spring's new light is bright?

VLADIKA DANILO

'Tis all the same, or now or then,
Old Father Time must run his course;
'Tis by the ancients so ordained!

ABBOT STEPHEN

Be that so, there might have been a better way! 2680
(A YOUNG MAN comes up to them. He kisses first the
hand of THE VLADIKA and then that of THE
ABBOT.)

VLADIKA DANILO

What is it, lad? Whence comest thou?
Art going to tell us something good?

THE YOUTH

I am from Rijeka come;
Serdar Yanko sent me to thee,
That I might tell thee what with us has been! 2685

VLADIKA DANILO

Then tell, my lad, as quickly as thou know'st!

2683. Reeyeka is a little town in a district of the same name, situated north-west of Scutari.

THE YOUTH

Of how we heard of what befell, I tell :
 At Cetinje, how when the Turks all fell,
 Brave Serdar Yanko sent at once
 Unto Rijeka's Turks two youths : 2690
 "Who wisheth not to spit upon the Koran,
 "Let him take flight, nor hesitate too long !"
 These Envoy-youths the Turks enticed,
 And both at Obod them did hang.
 Whereon the Serdar called the country-side, 2695
 And to Rijeka all made haste :—
 What use?—the Turks had gone,
 Made off by water, far as white Scutàri ;
 Bogdan it was, who did outrun us all ;
 'Twas he who killed the Kadi of Rijeka ; 2700
 To thee the Serdar would with chieftains come,
 To tell to thee how everything fell out,
 But time was not, and so they stayed behind ;
 Obod they raz'd unto the ground,
 And Mosques and towers are no more to be found, 2705
 So that no more our Market reeks of Infidels !

(THE YOUNG MAN bows again, kisses the hand of
 THE VLADIKA, puts a letter on his knee, and
 departs. VLADIKA DANILO calls one of his pupils
 to read the letter, that IGUMAN STEPHEN may
 hear too.)

THE YOUNG MAN (*taking the letter and reading it*)
 "Knez Nicola and all the Doupiliani

2694. See line 1758.

2700. Rijeka: pron. *Reeyéka*.

"Do greeting send unto our Vladika!
 "We now make known to thee what did befall:
 "When news we got of what at Cetinje had been, 2710
 "There was a bloody struggle with our Turks;
 "One day and one whole night the slaughter lasted;
 "Tzrmnitza stream was filled with Turkish corpses,
 "With tithe-collectors, lords, and common plunderers!
 "Little of succour could there come to us; 2715
 "Heaps of our dead were lying strewn around;
 "A half of us have fallen in the fight;
 "We could not find more graves about the church;
 "By six and six we laid them under ground!
 "But every living Turk was killed in Tzrmnitza, 2720
 { "And Bèsatz Fort we levelled to the earth,
 { "And now for thee throughout our parts
 "Is not a trace of e'en one single Turk—
 "At least thou 'lt find not any Turkish ear—
 "Bodies headless, ruins, ashes views man here!"
 (VLADIKA DANILO *is weeping*, but IGUMAN STEPHEN
is laughing.)

VLADIKA DANILO

Thou hast not, Abbot, understood the letter; 2725
 Or thou wouldst also weep for them:
 Laid by sixes under Mother Earth!

ABBOT STEPHEN

I understood it, but I cannot weep;

2721. Besatz Fort is in Tzrmnitza district; it is now a ruined town, reputed to have once been the site of a Jewish colony.

Did I know how to weep for joy,
Weeping should be my sole employ! 2730
But, as for me, when sings my soul,
My tears evaporate in joy!

*(Someone knocks on the kitchen door, as if to break it ;
they think he is mad.)*

ABBOT STEPHEN

Help us, O Lord, and help, thou new-born Year!
For joyous news comes in from every side,
If there be clown, let him come in as well, 2735
That he may fill the house with glee and mirth!

*(THE YOUNG MEN open the door. Behold, VUK
MANDUSHITCH in a sullen temper, his great black
moustaches drooping on his broken breastplates, his
jeferdar also broken in his hand! Bloodstained he
sits down by the fire; to no one does he even say
"Good-day". All are astonished at seeing him thus.)*

VLADIKA DANILO

What hast thou, Vuk? thy mien indeed is sad!
'Tis clear thou comest from a bloodstain'd field,
And thou hast walk'd on red-hot fire;
Sure only God and He alone does know 2740
If any man save thee got off alive!
No broken breastplates save in desperate strife,
Nor jeferdars as thine, I trow,
Made with such pliant threads of steel!

2733. "New-born year", literally, in the Serbian "Little Christmas", see Appendix B.

VUK MANDUSHITCH (*with knitted brow*)

'Twas on St. Stephen's Day a cousin came 2745
 From Shtitari;—last summer she was wed—
 Who to me said: "Collectors quickly come
 "To Shtitari to gather from us tithes!"
 So fifty youths I straightway did collect;
 Near Shtitari in ambush did them hide, 2750
 For these voracious Turks my time to bide!
 Rifles crack'd sharp o'er all Lieshan's fields;
 Methought, these Turks are come for tithes,
 To strike new terror into raya eyes!
 Fighting I nearer heard by Prog'novitch; 2755
 And thither ran with comrades newly come.
 Arriving there, what trouble and disaster!—
 Two hundred taxers come upon the place,
 Two hundred taxers—Albanian Moslems wild—
 Attacking Radun's bloodstain'd towers;— 2760
 Radun at bay within his tower,
 And with him too his wife Liubitsa,
 A youngish wife and falcon-hearted,
 Loading rifles for her lord;
 She from the window calmly took good aim, 2765
 And seven soon lay dead about the yard!
 But his last moment near was come:
 Around his white and gleaming tower

2746. Shtitari, a village in Lieshan district; the name is interesting, meaning the abode of the "shield-makers". One comes across many villages in the Serbian lands which take their name from the occupation of the inhabitants, e.g. *Kopliari*, i.e. the place where the lance-makers live; *Kolari*, the place of the carriage-makers.

2755. Progonovitch, another village near Shtitari.

The Turks heap'd up the straw and hay ;
 Set it on fire from every side ; 2770
 Flames curl'd high into the sky,
 Radun's white tower began to burn ;
 He without ceasing plies his gun,
 Singing in clear, high-sounding voice.
 Of Baio sings he, and of Novak, 2775
 Sings of Vukota and Drashko,
 And of those twain, the Vuks of Terniné,
 Of Markovitch he sings, and of Tomanovitch.
 He calls upon the living and the dead ;
 His last hour grim is now before his eyes ! 2780

Our heaving breasts were torn in twain :
 We all rushed up to Radun's tower,
 And there around we grappled with the Turks ;
 From the tower we rescued Radun,
 The tower itself the flames destroyed. 2785
 Yet from somewhere sprang some help,
 And from that spot we chas'd the Turks
 { To the village of Kokoti,
 { On the height of Lieshko Field ;
 Eighty-three of them we killed.

So fighting round Radun's white tower, 2790
 The bullets broke the tokés on my breast,
 And when the bloody strife was nigh at end,
 The last shot that the Turks did fire,—
 { The very last !—cut through my jeferdar,
 { Which I was holding to my eye !—

2777. Terniné is a village in the Tsoutsé district.

2788. Kokoti is a village lying on the slope of the mountain *Velyi Vrh*, or *The Great Peak*, under which is Lieshko Polye, on the river Moratcha.

2791. *Toké*, a small silver disc or breastplate.

May it ne'er have another lord!— (*He weeps.*) 2795
And cut it right in two, as 'twere a reed!

I mourn far more my jeferdar,
Than I would mourn a lost right hand;
I mourn it as I would a son,
I mourn it as I would a brother,
'Twas a rifle far beyond all other; 2800
It brought good luck; it never fail'd;
There was no need to clean it ever,
It always shone bright as a mirror;
Amidst a thousand other guns 2805
Thou mightest know it when I fired!

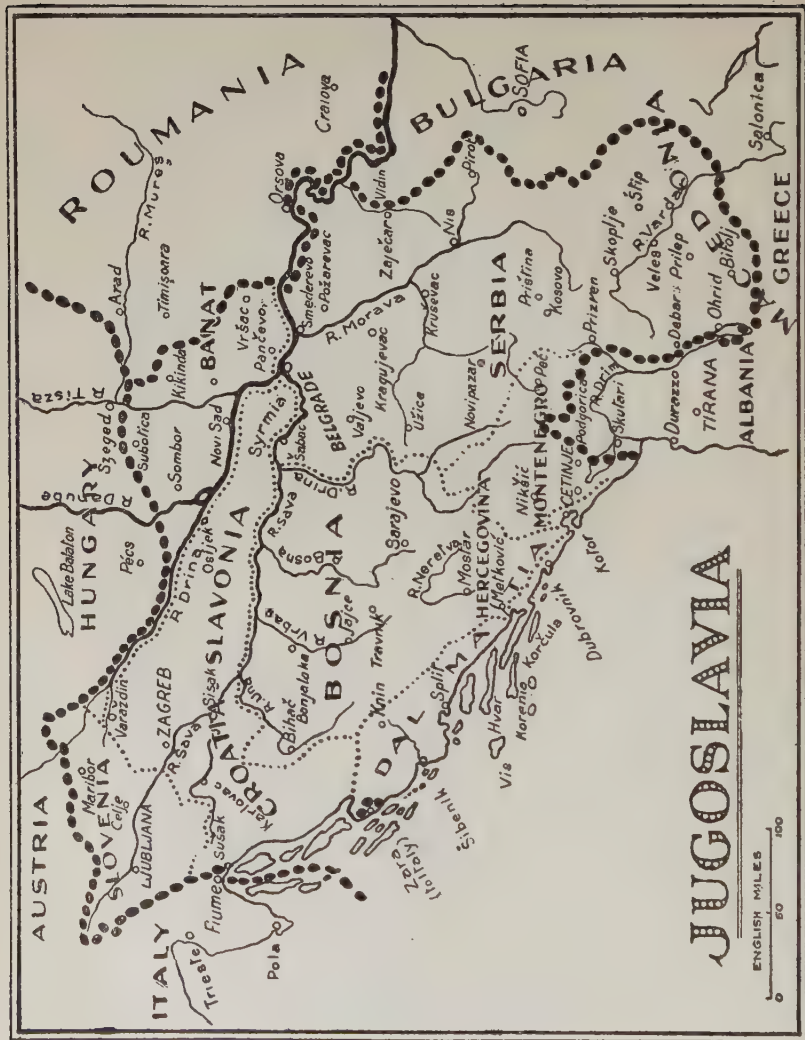
So Vladika I come to thee:
Are there no gunsmiths oversea,
Men of skill of wondrous sort,
To make it right again for me?

VLADIKA DANILO

O scowling Vuk, again lift thy moustaches! 2810
And let me see the tokés on thy chest,
That I may count the bullets of the rifles,
To see how many broke upon thy breast.
A head once dead doth not rise from its grave:
No gunsmith can thy shining weapon save! 2815
Thy head stay whole upon thy shoulders;
Sure thou shalt have another gun,
For in Vuk Mandushitch's hand
Rifle unsound can ne'er be found.

(*THE VLADIKA goes to his room to give VUK MANDUSHITCH a good jeferdar.*)

2811. *Toké*, a kind of breastplate made of silver.



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JUGOSLAVIA TO-DAY

[The Yugoslav Society of Great Britain.

Description of map on facing page.

The Jugoslavia of to-day provides engaging comment upon the wistful reflections of Vladika Danilo and the Blind Abbot. Ivan Mazuranić, in *The Death of Smail Aga Cengića*, lamented that, although the Great Creator had given to the birds quiet hollows and the longed-for nest, unto the fish the waters and the sea's blue depth, unto the beasts the woods and meadows with caverns cool and forests green, yet to the hapless raya or oppressed Serb was not even granted a crust of bread to moisten with his tears—

“But what say I, for sure He gave broad sky,
While with Earth's good insatiate still
Remains the Moslem eye.”

Hoping against hope, the Blind Abbot reminded himself in the XVIIIth Century that without death was never resurrection. In the XXth Century Serbia has arisen—resurgent from the sky, as during the blackest days of the Great War her refugees said she would, using the word “Serbia” in the larger sense for the whole of Southern Slavdom.

APPENDIX A

THE SLAVA

THE celebration of the *Slava*, or Feast of the Patron Saint, is a custom essentially Serbian. It is not to be found among the other Slav peoples. The writer had not long set foot in Serbia before he found himself under a kindly roof, where all was busy preparation for "our Slava". And the first reply to a string of questions was this: "Ah, the Slava is something quite special to Serbia!" Such in truth it is—a custom unique, peculiarly and distinctively Serbian. The Slava is an annual celebration. Every Serbian family has one day in the year, when there are performed these ceremonies—ceremonies partly religious and partly social. The Serbians on their conversion to Christianity took a patron saint to fill the void created by the disappearance of the family or tribal spirit associated with the ancient ancestor-worship. The ceremonies of the Slava Feast are thus partly a relic or survival of pre-Christian custom, and partly rites of Christian inspiration. Here the father of the house (or *domaćin*) appears in the rôle of a domestic priest, performing by himself—should there be no priest—the breaking of the *kolač* (i.e. the special wheat-flour cake) and also offering prayer. Extempore prayers of touching simplicity, reverence, and beauty may often be heard from unlettered peasants on these occasions.

A visit to the house is paid by the priest shortly before the Slava Feast, in order that he may bless the water which has been placed ready for his arrival in a special vessel.

This done, dipping a sprig of basil into the vessel, he besprinkles the various members of the family, and passes also from room to room, sprinkling as he goes. It should be mentioned also that the Slava Feast has been preceded by several days' fasting on the part of all the members of the family. A day or two before the Festival the womenfolk are busy preparing the wheat-flour *kolatch* (or cake), which is marked with a cross and the monogram I.N.R.I. But the *kolatch* is not the only cake to be got ready; the *kolyivo* is not less important than the *kolatch*, seeing that it must be made of well-boiled wheat, finely powdered sugar, chopped nuts, and almonds. The name *kolyivo*, suggesting as it does the idea of "the animal killed with the knife", is doubtless a relic of the pagan times, the animal sacrificed on the

altar being so named. Realizing on their conversion to Christianity that, under the Christian economy, all such sacrifices had disappeared before the Offering of Golgotha, the Serbians dropped the sacrifice but retained the word representing it, transferring the word to the boiled-wheat cake. But it is interesting to notice that the *kolyivo* cake does not appear at the Slava Feast, if the saint is supposed to be still living, as Elijah, or when the Patron is the Archangel Michael; in such cases the cake, as distinctly a symbolic offering for those who have passed through death, is inapplicable and out of place.

The day before the Slava Festival there is busy preparation of food to last for two or three days, and toward evening time all the tables are well loaded with good things for the guests who will soon arrive.

A vivid description of such a Slava Eve Reception is given by Mr. Voislav M. Petrovitch in his chapter on the National Customs of Serbia:—

“When the guests have all arrived, the host invites them to wash their hands—for no Serbian peasant would ever sit down to take food without first doing so. Then the host shows to each one his place at the table, always strictly observing precedence due to seniority.

“The girls of the house first pass round brandy to the assembled guests; this, at least in the winter, has generally been warmed, and honey or sugar has been added. While the brandy is being served all the guests stand, and in silence wait reverently for the ceremonies of the Slava to begin.

“The host places in the middle of the table a large wax candle, which he does not light until he has made the sign of the cross three times. Next he takes an earthen vessel containing a few embers, places in it a few small pieces of incense, and then lets the fragrance ascend to the ikon, which is, according to custom, occupying the place of honour in the room; then, still holding the censer, he stops for a few moments before each guest. That ceremony being ended, and if there be no priest present, the host himself invites his guests to engage in prayer. A great many Serbian peasants are gifted with the power of offering extempore prayers, and they are always in request at these ceremonies. The host passes the censer to his wife, whose it is to see that the fumes of the incense reach into every part of the house. Next the host breaks silence with the following prayer: ‘Let us pray,

O brethren, most reverently to the Almighty Lord our God, and to the Holy Trinity! O Lord, Thou omnipotent and gracious Creator of Heaven and Earth, deliver us, we pray Thee, from all unforeseen evil! . . .’ Then he invokes the saint whose festival they are celebrating, and prayer being over, the guests make the sign of the cross several times and supper begins.” (Vide *Serbia: Her People, History, and Aspirations*, pp. 258-9.)

There are many collections of Slava toasts. It is customary to drink the first glass “to the glory of the gracious God”. The idea of prosperity to the assembled company inspires the second glass, and the third is often “to the glory of the Holy Trinity”!

Early on the morning of the Slava Day itself the *svetchar*, or head of the family whose Slava it is, will go to church, taking with him the *kolyivo*, the *kolatch*, some wine, incense, and a wax candle. They are deposited in front of the altar, where they remain during the morning service. The Slava cake is cut from underneath by the priest, so that his cuts correspond with the lines of the cross shown on the upper surface. Then the priest breaks the cake, and turns it in a circle with the help of the head of the family, while they pronounce certain prayers together, chanting a sort of invocation for fertility in general, similar to that which is sung at the nuptial ceremony. Should the church be far away, and the *domaćin* be unable to leave his premises for long, the Slava cake may be cut in halves by him in his own house with the help of his male guests: chanting the while certain formal prayers, and standing in a circle, they hold the cake so that a thumb of each guest shall be placed on the top of the cake, while they each support it with four fingers.

To the midday meal on Slava Day many more guests are usually invited than had attended the supper on the previous evening, and on this day the stranger, irrespective of creed, may claim hospitality. We read, for instance, how Marko Kralyevitch was wont to receive many Mohammedan guests on his Slava Day. All the guests rise together, cross themselves with great reverence, and in perfect silence, with glasses filled, they await the address to be made by the *domaćin* or host. Again three, or perhaps more, toasts are proposed and accepted, and of course as many times are the glasses again emptied and refilled before the “midday” meal is even begun. The festivities have often lasted several hours before the guests remember that it is time to go home. Many guests, indeed, remain in the house all night and the next day,

and some devotees of good wine used actually to stay, on occasions, for three whole consecutive days and nights.

A vivid idea of a Slava Feast in ancient enthusiastic style, as proverbially it can be done by the people of the district of Nish, is given by Stefan Sremac in one of the most entertaining plays in the Serbian language, *Ivkova Slava*.

APPENDIX B

THE SERBIAN CHRISTMAS FEAST

(i) *Badñi dan*: The day before Christmas the *domaćin* (or pater-familias), after offering up a prayer, starts long before dawn, taking with him an axe, in order to fetch the *badñak* (perhaps from the same root as the Serbian verb, *bdeti*, to watch, sit up at night), the oak trunk which he has already marked out. Before beginning to fell the tree he takes off his cap by way of salutation, throws a handful of corn upon it, turns towards the east, makes a cross, and offers up a prayer, closing with the words: "Give to me and to the Little God abundantly, O God!" (The Serbian word for Christmas, *Božić*, means "the little God".) In cutting down the tree he is careful that it should fall towards the east just as the sun is rising, and that it shall fall without touching other trees; otherwise it would be of no good omen. Then he cuts the trunk into three parts, of which the biggest is called the main log (*glavni badñak*). Uttering another prayer, and making the sign of the cross, he takes them home. Sometimes the logs are very large; as Vuk Karadjic says, in the larger households it is not unusual for the log to be dragged home by eight oxen. The logs are set leaning against the outer wall, ready to be taken into the house in the evening with special ceremony. As he sets the three logs against the wall he says to each: "A merry log-day!" ("*Sretan badñi dan!*")

In Montenegro people believe that on this night the earth is blended with Paradise—Paradise to the old Slavs meaning the abode of the dead, where the souls are longing for light and warmth and food, which on this night is presented to them.

Then the cattle are driven into their sheds, two people holding lighted wax candles at the door, and kissing each other as the last animal comes into the shed, in order that the animals may love.

The *domaćin* afterwards brings some straw to the mother of the family, who strews it on the floor, clucking like a hen, and followed by the children, who "cheep-cheep" after her like chicks—in order that the fowls may lay, and that the coming year may be more fruitful than the last. The straw also suggests the birth of Our Lord in the manger. But to return to the logs, which we left leaning against the wall: the *domaćin* goes out to fetch them, and

as he comes in between two lighted candles at the threshold, saying, "Good evening, and happy log-day", the *domaćica*, or mother of the family, greets him with "Good luck!" and throws a handful of corn in his face. The *domaćin* lays the logs on the fire, sprinkling them with corn and wine in the form of a cross, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". In some districts it is customary to add: "Thy health, festive yule-log! We give to thee this wine and corn; give thou to us health, peace, male children, the fruits of the earth, and increase of cattle and all good luck!" In other places the *paterfamilias* takes off his cap to the log, saying: "Be thou welcome, O log, and may God preserve thee!" The whole family form a circle, the males on the right of the father, and the females with the mother next to the *domaćin* on the left, so that the youngest son and daughter close the circle. The father is here a domestic priest: he takes incense, burning it so that each member of the family gets some of the fragrance. Then all the family pray to God in silence.

The supper is served on spread empty sacks on the straw-strewn floor. It consists only of fruits and cakes without meat.

(ii) *Božić*: For six weeks before Christmas there has lasted the long fast, during which no meat, no eggs, no butter, no milk, but only fruits and vegetables, have been eaten. The third day before Christmas is *Tučin dan*, or slaughter day, on which is killed the fatted animal; it may be pig, or sheep, or goat, or fowl. Early in the morning of Christmas Day the father, as head of the house, puts the animal on the spit and sets it before the fire, uttering a prayer as he does so.

Before the roast meat can be eaten on Christmas morning a religious ceremony must be gone through in church. In Bosnia especially a rite known as "The Peace of God" is performed after the service: everyone approaches his neighbour, and kisses him or her on both cheeks, saying, "Christ is born!"; the other answering, "Of a truth He is born!" and returning the kiss. It is interesting to note that in Montenegro, as is related by Sir Arthur Evans in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1881, vol. xliii, p. 228, it is customary to include the animals in "The Peace of God". We quote the following: "The ceremony in the church over . . . before sitting down to the festal meal the Domachitza (i.e. the mother of the house), taking with her a dish containing corn, a cup of wine, and a pomegranate, begged me to accompany

her to the cattle-stall. She then entered the stall, and, having first sprinkled them with corn, took the wine-cup in her hand and said: 'Good morning, little mother! The peace of God be on thee! Christ is born; of a truth He is born. Mayst thou be healthy. I drink to thee in wine; I give thee a pomegranate; mayst thou meet with all good luck!' She then lifted the cup to her lips, took a sip, tossed the pomegranate among the herd, and throwing her arms round the she-goat, whose health she had already drunk, gave it the 'Peace of God'—kissed it, that is, over and over again. When I asked her why she had singled it out among all the others she answered: 'She is the house-mother of the goats'."

The Christmas Feast is a specially intimate domestic festival: each family is at home; no guests are expected. But each family chooses a *polazeňnik*, or Christmas visitor, who must always be a boy chosen from their circle of acquaintances, as a dropper-in for the Christmas Day festivities. He must come as early as possible; he greets the family with "Christ is born!" and scatters a handful of corn into the house. The house-mother receives him with, "Of a truth He is born!" and throws a handful of corn in his face. He approaches the Yule fire, and taking up the remains of the main log, knocks it against the cauldron hook above, so as to make the sparks fly, saying: "Even so may our brother *domařin* have oxen and cows and goats and sheep, and all good luck!"

The Western Christmas plum-pudding is unknown in these celebrations. They make a round, flat cake with a round hole in the centre, with spoke-like ornaments to give it the form of a wheel; this is called *kolatch* (from *kolo*, a wheel). A second speciality is a sort of pastry-cake made on Christmas morning; this is called *chesnitsa* (Old Slavonic: *chest*, part), because everyone in the house must get a part of the cake, a part must be left for the traveller, a part for the poor, and a part for the house personified. Inside the cake is put a coin, and whoever gets it is supposed to be lucky all the year through. It must be an old silver coin, and the recipient must give it back, receiving a modern one in exchange.

In our poem the Abbot Stephen recalls with especial delight the Christmas toasting:—

"And that which pleaseth me 'bove all is this:
To toast all round—a general health to call." (ll. 2468–9.)

This takes place after the serving of the roast meat. It is general to keep the Christmas festive food about for three days, and to leave the straw scattered over the floor till "Little Christmas" or New Year's Day, which ends the Christmas feast.

The afternoon of Christmas Day is devoted to games, kolo dancing, and it is held to be lucky to start a piece of work on Christmas Day.

Christmas in Serbian countries may be regarded as the feast of the New Year. The Yule rites, as we have seen, are a private cult, and have the character of a purely household celebration, the father of the family performing the function of a domestic priest. In its ancient form the Serbian Yule ceremony was celebrated at the time of the rising of the Pleiades (early in November), and lasted three days. Many of the Serbian Christmas carols, indeed, begin with an invocation of the Pleiades.

The annual feast of the dead was celebrated when the Pleiades first became visible on the horizon at evening. This was the feast of the year's end and the year's beginning, and intimately connected with the cult of ancestors, as well as with the solemn rekindling of the sacred fire on the hearth. Similar annual festivals are common to the ancient and modern primitive peoples.

As to the sacred fire on the hearth, in Serbian countries fire is still respected as a sacred thing, and preserved from the contamination of any dirty object.

The Christmas Feast, called in Serbian *Božić* (i.e. "little God"), may be said to be the lineal descendant of the cult of fire in its triple heavenly form—the primeval trinity of Sun, Moon, and Morning Star, very popular objects of Serbian tales and songs.

APPENDIX C

“A MONTENEGRIN GENIUS”

“A N Appreciation of Prince-Bishop Nyegosh” was the subject of a lecture by Professor Pavle Popovitch, sometime Rector of Belgrade University, at the Grafton Galleries, London, on the third Monday in December 1917, Dr. R. M. Burrows, Principal of King’s College, presiding. Professor Pavle Popovitch said that in the Middle Ages Montenegro formed part of the Serbian Empire, but the Battle of Kossovo was a death-blow to both. During the Dark Ages of Turkish oppression both struggled for freedom, and from the beginning of the emancipation at the dawn of the XIXth Century up to this day they had always acted jointly against the common oppressor. The liberator of Serbia, Karageorge, entered into friendly relations with the Prince-Bishop Peter I of Montenegro, and sought to form an alliance with him. The young Prince-Bishop Peter II of Montenegro found a strong support in Prince Milosh of Serbia. Prince Michael of Serbia concluded a formal Treaty of Alliance with Prince Danilo of Montenegro, with a view to concerted military action on a vast scale against the Turk. Twice did Prince Milan and Prince Nikola jointly go to war against the Turks. So also did King Peter and King Nikola. Professor Pavle Popovitch then went on to describe the author of *Gorski Vijenac* as one of the greatest Montenegrins—indeed, one of the greatest Serbs—that ever lived; one who was both sovereign of Montenegro and at the same time the greatest poet of the Southern Slavs. He was the Prince-Bishop, or *Vladika*, of Montenegro. Montenegro could not be shown to greater advantage than as represented by this great man, the supreme expression of his country. Peter Petrovitch Njegosh was born in 1813, in a Montenegrin village. He first attended a kind of elementary school at Bocche di Cattaro, and then continued his studies privately under a tutor in Cetinje, his tutor being the Serbian poet Milutinovitch. He was a member of the house of Njegosh, which had ruled over Montenegro since the end of the XVIIth Century in the capacity of Prince-Bishops, Montenegro being in those days a theocratic principality. Njegosh was still quite a youth when, in 1830, he was elected to succeed his uncle, the deceased Prince-Bishop Peter I. Njegosh became a monk, and three years later, in 1833, when he was only twenty

years of age, he was created Prince-Bishop in Petrograd, in the presence and by order of Tsar Nicholas I himself. From that time onward he devoted his life to the government of his country, and his love of books and meditation, in the loneliness of Cetinje, broken only from time to time by his journeys to Russia, Italy, and Austria. He was an excellent sovereign, and it was he who first civilized and organized the turbulent and semi-barbarous tribes which constituted the Montenegro of yore. He also gave a position of international importance to his country, which had up to that time always been considered a Turkish province, and for which he, by his unvaried efforts, won respect and recognition as an independent Serbian State. He died in 1851, too young, alas! to accomplish all that was needful for the young Montenegrin State, and too young also to give his full literary measure.

The reader who reads Serbo-Croatian with facility may pick many a fragrant nosegay of pithy anecdote and much delightful humour from the series of books, extending now to seven handy volumes, by Mićun M. Pavićević, published in Zagreb under the title *Crnogorci u pričama i anegdota*, i.e. The Montenegrins in Story and Anecdote.

APPENDIX D

KOSSOVO 1389

THE Collections of the Yugoslav National Songs (by Vuk Karadžić, B. Petranović, Miladinovic Brothers, Iv. Jastrebov, by the "Matica Hrvatska", and Slovenski Glasnik 1864, etc.)—all celebrate the heroic splendour of the Battle of Kossovo. The 500th anniversary of the catastrophe of Kossovo 1389, was celebrated both in Zagreb—by the Yugoslav Academy—and in Belgrade, by the Royal Serbian Academy. The Zagreb Yugoslav Academy devoted an entire ample volume of its transactions to it (*Rad. Jugoslav Akadem.*, vol. xcvi). Yugoslav literature possesses an entire bibliography of Kossovo dramas and novels, written by Serbs from Bosnia (Sima Milutinović), the Banat (St. Popović), Dalmatia (Matija Ban, Ivo Vojnović), Bačka (Miloš Cvetić), and the Kingdom of Serbia (Milovan Vidaković). The Croat Tresic-Pavičić sings the whole epic of Kossovo as fervently as the Serb Nikola Gjorić. The Croat Armin Pavić and the Serb Stojan Novakovic are equally engaged in selections of these same Kossovo songs for the Yugoslav masses. The Slavonian J. Nović and the Serbian Sreta Stojković, following the example of the national poetry, write songs upon the battle of Kossovo. Davorin Jenko, the Slovene, prepared as his *discours de reception* for the Royal Serbian Academy two compositions, both on Kossovo themes (*Kossovo* and the *Maiden of Kossovo*), his finest musical work. The Dalmatian Ivan Mestrovic designed the Temple of Kossovo, a masterpiece of sculpture and architecture—the epic of Kossovo in stone. If I were to enumerate all the literary and artistic works on this theme created by Yugoslavs no matter whence they hail, this list of the works on Kossovo would assume considerable proportions.

If it was necessary to celebrate and extol the defeat of Kossovo, surely this could have been done by the Serbs alone; why should others join them? Why should the Croats have joined, since they had lost their independence long before the Battle of Kossovo, and they were not reached by the conquering Turks till long after the Battle of Kossovo, and since, generally speaking, they are in no way connected with the Battle of Kossovo?

And what of the Slovenes, to whom the Battle of Kossovo should mean even less? Nor were all the Serbs equally connected

with it. The Serbian Kingdom in Macedonia had been subjugated by the Turks eighteen years before Kossovo (in 1371). The Bosnian State fell more than a half a century after Kossovo (in 1463). The Herzegovinians lost their independence twenty years after the fall of Bosnia (1482). Zeta (Montenegro) was conquered by the Turks towards the end of the XVth Century, more than a hundred years after Kossovo (1499). And, moreover, at the first glance it seems not even the Serbs in Serbia were altogether crushed at Kossovo.

The principality of Serbia, as a Turkish vassal State, existed up to 1459, i.e. for full seventy years after Kossovo. The Battle of Kossovo, when all is taken into consideration, was not so much a catastrophe as only an episode—a very tragic one, but still an episode—and concerning only a part of the Serbian nation.

This, then, is all the magnitude that can justly be ascribed to Kossovo as an event. Nor is the Battle of Kossovo at all exceptional, insofar as the heroism of the Kossovo heroes is concerned. The Byzantine Emperor Constantine, together with the far older and more important Byzantine Empire, perished at an equally important time and place with many of his Byzantine princes—yet the nation has not so celebrated this downfall, neither are there such widespread traditions concerning it, much less a similar epic.

What, then, is Kossovo?

This is what it is. When at the beginning of the XIVth Century the Turks appeared, and when it soon became apparent how grave a danger they constituted, the Serbian State under the Nemanjici was the one rock capable of checking the waves of the Turkish invasion. The old Byzantium was no longer as before. The leading powers in her vast territories were the new Slav States of Serbia and Bulgaria, who had fought each other for supremacy till the Battle of Velbuzd in 1330, since when Serbia had taken the lead in the Balkans. The Turks had good reason to remember the auxiliary force under the command of Novak Grebostrek, which the Serbian King Milutin sent to Byzantium in 1312 against the Turks. The Serbian Emperor Dusan (1331-55) was a potentate whom the Turks could not even dream of challenging. The Serbian Empire, the centre around which the greater part of the Yugoslav nation was united, and which was preparing to become the heir of the Byzantine Empire, was a wall against which the Turkish power was breaking—an organized war-power of the first class, as we know from

history. Unfortunately Dusan died, and his State crumbled up into separate provinces with separate centres and aims. Meantime the Turks were continually growing stronger. The defeat of the Serbian King Vukasin, and the fall of the Macedonian Kingdom (1371), clearly foreshadowed the inevitable end. The central controlling power of the Nemanjici had ceased to exist. In their place the most important and the most prominent of the remaining Serbian rulers was Prince Lazar, who reigned over the countries of the Morava and Danube. He was not only the first in geographical order to face the Turks, but he was also the only hope of all the unconquered part of the Serbian nation. He was Serbia's Tsar, as he is called in the national songs, although in history he never bore this title. The danger from the Turks was fast drawing nearer, not only to the Serbs who had belonged to Dusan's Empire, but also to those who dwelt beyond its borders. All that could be gathered together, gathered round Lazar. The union between the various Serbian principalities under Prince Lazar, Prince Vuk Branković, whose lands lay west of the Lazar's, Prince George Balsać, who ruled the western coast-lands, the Montenegro of to-day, and King Tvrdko of Bosnia, became stronger, closer and more intimate. Between them they waged a successful war against the Turks right up to the Battle of Kossovo. But the Battle of Kossovo was at hand which was to decide who was to be master of the Balkan Peninsula, Serbs or Turks, Christianity or Islam.

And when, on Kossovo Plain, in spite of the united front of the Serbian rulers, the heroism of Obilić, Lazar, and other heroic Serbian princes—although the Serbian nation fought in "blood up to the knees", as the national songs say—the war was lost on that day, as could be plainly seen, even though Serbia and Zeta (Montenegro) kept their name as Turkish vassal States, and Bosnia and Herzegovina retained their independence. The true loss was this, that it was plain that the Turkish power was irresistible, that the "Serbian Empire had fallen", that for them all their days were numbered, and that it was Kossovo Field that had caused the end of it all. So Kossovo became not only the grave of Serbia, but also of the Jugoslavs, and there was nothing left but to lie in it, as was indeed the fate of the nation. There lies the tragedy of the Kossovo battle. This is the reason why the Battle of Kossovo has enveloped all Jugoslavdom in darkness: this is why the Jugoslavs cried out in one voice for the "Serbian Empire", for the "brave Car Lazar", the "heroic

Obilic", for "Jug Bogdan and his nine sons, nine Jugovici", who met their deaths on Kossovo Field. They fell in the defence of all the Jugoslavs.

And as the Jugoslavs, even after the Battle of Kossovo, continued to fight against the Turks for centuries, they found in the exploits of the Kossovo heroes a high example of how to fight, and in the Kossovo heroes themselves they saw the honourable protagonists of the great idea for which they laid down their lives. Because of all this the Jugoslavs have found in the Kossovo heroes an inspiration for their ideals and a reason for glorifying them. The Kossovo defenders have almost become the mythological demi-gods of Yugoslav poetry, and their ideals are almost equal to the ideals of religion. The deliverance of Kossovo has become a symbol which is looked upon as the only sound basis of the future, a symbol which has never been forgotten since Kossovo until this war. This is why the fall of Kossovo and the Kossovo heroes are remembered more deeply and fully than any other downfall of other empires which fell before and after Kossovo. Kossovo is the symbol of the freedom of the Jugoslavs.

There is one thing more that was felt by the Jugoslavs in the Kossovo catastrophe. Beyond the blood and horror of Kossovo Field the Jugoslavs beheld a brilliant period of the Serbian history, from which, but for Kossovo, Yugoslav unity and all its triumphs would have grown. National unification, which was begun under Stjepan Nemanja and well developed under Czar Dusan (1331-55), could not fail to become the ideal of Yugoslav strength, for which the nation sighed in the dark days after Kossovo. Therefore the Nemanjici, and especially the "mighty Car Stjepan", as the Yugoslav national songs call Czar Dusan, are among the most popular personages of the national poetry. Therefore the mass of the people looked upon Kossovo not only as the downfall, but also as the destruction of a great impetus towards a happy future. This is the interpretation of Kossovo Field as it was understood by the modern Serbian poet when he says that "Kossovo has swallowed all". In these words he did not think only of the fallen Serbian State, or the final stand made at Kossovo against the Turks, but also of the destruction of the foundation from which—if there had been no Kossovo—a great, powerful, and free Yugoslav Empire would have grown. In the song the words "*Kossovo has swallowed all*" are merely a reply to the question, "*Where is Prizren, the glorious city? Where are the imperial palaces? Where is Dusan's golden age which wonders wrought?*"

It is that "Dusan's age" which "wrought wonders" that all Jugoslavdom is regretting in its national songs.

That is the significance of the Battle of Kossovo for the Jugoslavs.

But the significance of the Battle of Kossovo goes farther and far beyond the borders of the Jugoslavs. The Serbian heroes did not die on Kossovo Plain in defending Serbia and Jugoslavdom only, but also in defending Europe. They shed their blood for the "Holy Cross and golden freedom". Nowhere does the national poetry say that they died "for Serbian freedom". The "golden freedom" of Serbian national poetry has a wider meaning. The *Te Deum* which was celebrated in the Church of St. Denis in Paris after the Battle of Kossovo, because, according to a false report, it was believed that the Serbs had been victorious, was no more than an expression of rejoicing over the victory "of golden freedom" in general. The Battle of Nicopolis, which took place only seven years after Kossovo, taught all Europe what the Turks were, and what a danger they were for the "Holy Cross and golden freedom" of the whole Christian world. The great popularity of George Kastriot Skenderbeg throughout Europe—although his country possessed none of the importance which Serbia had—rests solely on the fact that he was a champion of the Cross against the Crescent. The countless songs which were sung in Europe to celebrate victories over the Turks—songs to which Serbian poets have also contributed to a considerable extent—as, for instance, Ivan Gundulić of Ragusa (1588–1638), Jovan Rajić of Srem (1726–1801), etc.—are nothing but a call to arms against the common danger of the unbaptized barbarian. Had there been no Kossovo, Europe would have felt the hard consequences of a Turkish invasion.

This is how the struggle with the Turks was understood. Political Europe did not succeed either in saving Jugoslavdom, which, in spite of its being a Christian power, might have been a matter of indifference to her, nor did she efficiently protect herself. Hungary, who was the most called upon to act, saw in the disaster of the Jugoslavs the weakening of formidable rivals of her own personal interests. Occasionally in the moment of danger Hungary promised that she would do her best, but she invariably demanded exorbitant compensation for her services, such as the cession of Belgrade, Mačva, or Braničevo, Serbia's promise to become her vassal, or Serbia's permission for the passage of her troops through Serbia—and usually Hungary put

such requests in such a manner that the poor Serbian rulers were compelled to throw in their lot with the Turks in order to remain true to their duty as protectors of their nation and faithful subjects. After Serbia's first disaster in 1439 the unfortunate Serbian despot, Gjurgj Brankovic, travelled all over Europe imploring help. But Europe was silent. Hungary first made peace with the Turks; subsequently Hungary trampled her oath underfoot and went to battle against the Turks at Varna—and was beaten. The rest of Europe did even less. The Council of Mantua, which was convened in 1463 in order to save Bosnia, failed to come to an understanding till Bosnia had fallen. In the meantime Turkey advanced and thrust her knife into the very heart of Europe.

This series of historic events after the defeat of Serbia is very instructive. The Jugoslavs are the gate through which the East tends to break through to the West, and *vice versa*. In the Battle of Kossovo they put forward their utmost strength to shut that gate of the East, and in spite of Kossovo they have given marvellous expression to the significance of that fight. Europe was too late in recognizing the importance of the post at which the Jugoslavs stand between the East and the West. But the Jugoslavs also hold the gate from the West to the East. They are absolutely united in their efforts to keep the gate shut from that side also; but Europe in the interest of the Jugoslavs, and her own as well, must see to it that the Jugoslavs do not shut that gate for their own sake only.

In the fight for liberation and unity the Serbian nation had before its eyes only Kossovo and the catastrophe of Kossovo. The songs of Kossovo have borne the nation on wings from one victory to another. In Kossovo regained, the Serbian nation saw also the earnest of its full power to carry out its national rôle, just as the nation had seen its end in the defeat. When, in 1912, Kossovo was returned to Serbia, the whole Yugoslav world was with its heart on Kossovo Field. A vast concourse of pilgrims went to the liberated Kossovo to pay homage to the shades of St. Lazar, Obilic, and the other martyrs of Kossovo, and to pledge themselves that they would labour for complete unification.

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APPENDIX E

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION AND ENGLISH VERSE

DURING his travels in South-East Europe, the writer has often been questioned in regard to English verse and the peculiarities of English spelling and pronunciation. In his library by the sea in Crete, M. Venizelos recently remarked to the writer: "English I can read, and even speak, better than I can understand it when spoken to me! My British friends seem to me to jump over so many syllables". Another statesman in South-East Europe once remarked to the writer: "The English write down Liverpool and pronounce it Manchester, and how are we to remember all the different values of *ough* in the words *cough* and *bough* and *tough*, *through* and *though*, *ought* and *borough*!" A brilliant Southern Slav essayist tells how he can never forget the first time he actually heard the word *comfortable* in London; he wondered whatever word it could be, and was to some extent relieved to find that he had for years known the word in print. A learned bishop of the Serbian Church pointed out to the present writer a Miltonic line which puzzled him: he had been counting the syllables and could not see how the poet could regard it as a ten-syllable "heroic", iambic line. Many similar "difficulties", indeed, have been brought to one's notice from Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, or Swinburne. Professor Pavle Popovitch, for several years Rector of the University of Belgrade, has called Nyegosh "the Milton of Montenegro"; a sincere tribute from a great authority. But Professor Pavle Popovitch was not like the Englishman who kept *Paradise Lost* upon his shelves without reading it, because he had an idea that the poem was in a monotonous, "heroic" decasyllabic line! Were such the case, surely *Paradise* were doubly lost! No! A British Poet Laureate has shown the surprising variety which Milton superimposes on a simple time-scheme without weakening our perception of its absolute and unvarying recurrence. True the lines of *Paradise Lost* are in *duple* measure, but never in "monotonous iambics"; on the contrary, they are powerful, supple, self-poised.

Each great poet has a movement peculiar to himself. Tennyson tells us that each of his idylls was composed to a different music. The intellectual contents of verse, its more subtle and delicate

refinements of thought and feeling, must naturally be mirrored in its metre. In his *Elegy* on Burton, Mr. Swinburne gives us as a heroic line:

Illimitable, insuperable, infinite.

What has been termed "the dead doctrine of syllabic feet" will lead us nowhere in considering a line like this. We may quarrel with Swinburne if we will, though everybody admits that he was gifted with an exquisitely sensitive ear. But what is quite clear is this: that the poet's own ear led him to suppose that—syllables notwithstanding!—this line could be read in the proper *time*. As a hint to the foreign student it need only be said that, rightly to estimate the variations in any particular line one must accurately observe the relation between its *syllables* and its *time*. This is work of great delicacy. When Tennyson in his *Princess* writes:

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,

or when Swinburne gives us:

Thou art older and colder of spirit and blood than I,

it is clear that time is the *governing* principle, and that "quantity" is the factor dictating suitability. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* gives us another illustration in point: in this one poem the word *spiritual* has a value equivalent sometimes to four, sometimes to three, sometimes only to two, normal syllabic spaces. The foreign student who has learnt to read English aloud with some appreciation will have at once observed that the number of syllables which may occupy a line obviously depends upon their bulk and weight. Why has Pope so pleased innumerable ears with his lines:

The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

"Dunciad", Book III.

The sultry Sirius burns the thirsty plains.

"Pastorals."

Certainly a mere counting of syllables does not supply the answer!

Every student of English verse must have noticed how effectively in the pages of *Punch*, for instance, the relation between *syllables* and their *time* is recognized and utilized in the composition of light and vivacious verse. "Why, *what a very singularly* rich old man", etc.: here the reader is expected instinctively to crowd the eight italicized syllables into the time of four for the required vivacity of effect, and the junior British schoolboy does so; he recognizes intuitively that the line can be read in no other way!

J. W. W.

APPENDIX F

YUGOSLAVIA—PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE¹

DR. SETON WATSON, whose *nom de plume*, Scotus Viator, was almost a household word amongst the Southern Slav peoples even before the Great War, delivered a wireless broadcast from London concerning Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav peoples on the evening of Wednesday, February 20, 1929, which was by a happy coincidence heard in Belgrade in a room upon a hill at Topčider, at Villa Cambridge, taken down in shorthand there and then—and contributed to the forthcoming number of the Belgrade daily journal *Politika* after it had been translated into the Serbian language. The Yugoslav Envoy and Minister in Great Britain, Dr. Georges Diouritch, who presided at the broadcast, said that Serbia had been much associated with Great Britain during the Great War, and was to-day united with Croatia and Slovenia in one kingdom—the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. British people who came out during the War to help Serbia had often been so kind as to express appreciation of the country and its people—and a desire even to return to Yugoslavia. One was in safe hands in listening to Dr. Seton Watson, one of the greatest authorities in Great Britain on the Southern Slav peoples.

Dr. Seton Watson, in the course of his lecture, said that the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes—now just ten years old, having been constituted in November 1918—was one of the most beautiful and interesting countries in Europe. Whether regarding it from the religious, the political, or the purely social point of view, one could truthfully say that hardly any country could enjoy a greater freedom from the “monotone”. Moreover, amid every variety of scenery and profusion of romantic beauty the artistic visitor could feast his eye upon the colours, the costumes, and the festivals of the Past. Yugoslavia has to-day, continued the lecturer, a population of some 12,000,000 Serbs and Croats, who speak the same language though they use two differing scripts—the Serbs being Greek Orthodox, while the Croats and Slovenes are Roman Catholic, and there are close upon 1,000,000 Moslems, to be found mostly in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yugoslavia may still be called predominantly

¹ For an attractive description of Yugoslavia *vide* the volume by Lena Q. Yovitchitch, London, A. & C Black, 1928, in *Peeps at Many Lands* series, as well as *Pages From Here and There in Serbia*, by the same author, Belgrade, 1926.

a peasant State. There are only three towns with over one hundred thousand inhabitants. Factories are few and far between; while mining, so thriving in the Middle Ages, is only slowly reviving. Serbia to-day is a land of peasant people, because the Turks who held the country 500 years obliterated all traces of the Aristocracy and Middle Class. The peasant leaders who won Serbia's independence were men of headlong daring and some diplomatic skill, and they achieved their purpose with very little help from outside.

"Another very special feature of Yugoslavia," added Dr. Seton Watson, "is its wonderfully rich epic, ballad, and lyric poetry. The national songs of Serbia have been sung down the ages by patriotic *bards*, to the accompaniment of a one-stringed instrument—which looks very much like a mandolin—called the *guslé*. These Bards, or *gouslars*, as they were called, really kept alive the spirit of their countrymen under the yoke of bondage. The great defeat of Kossovo in June 1389, at the hands of the Turks under Sultan Murat, might be called the Flodden of Serbia, for there her king Lazar, with all the flower of the Serbian nobility, fell.

"The Kossovo Cycle of National Poems has been for a long time the admiration of Europe, and it is significant that even nowadays the real test of a writer's elegance and purity of diction in the modern literary language is this: to get as near as possible to the language of the National Poetry at its best. It is not less remarkable that there exists no gulf between the literary language and the peasant dialect.

"Slovenia is the most easterly of the Alpine districts, and anybody who does not want to go to the crowded resorts of Switzerland will be delighted with this fresh and picturesque corner of Yugoslavia. The traveller will find good inns, simple fare, and a friendly, hard-working people.

"Bosnia and Dalmatia, however, are the two great gems of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. In Dalmatia, Spalato or *Split* is unique among European towns. In the middle of the eighteenth century a Scottish architect, Robert Adam, spent six weeks in Spalato in studying the remains of the Palace of Diocletian and the details of Roman domestic architecture, and he afterwards spent the rest of his life in Great Britain applying the principles which he there learnt. Adelphi, along the Thames river front, presents examples of his work. Ragusa, or *Dubrovnik*, will provide the visitor with no less architectural charm, and it has exquisitely beautiful surroundings. Dubrovnik, a little Slav republic for many centuries, had a whole galaxy of Yugoslav

poets at the time when Milton was just beginning to write. The famous Dalmatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović was born of peasant parents in a wilderness of stone—in the poorest part of the Dalmatian mountains. One of the masterpieces of Meštrović is the Račić Memorial Chapel, perched on a hill near Cavtat, some ten miles south of Ragusa. The Dalmatians are a tough, seafaring race, who have doubled their merchant marine since the War. The people of Dalmatia have been under the power and influence of Byzantium, Rome, Venice, and Vienna, but they have always remained intensely Slav.

“Quite near to Dubrovnik is Montenegro with the glorious Bay of Cattaro and its little capital of Cetinje, entrenched in its rocky fastnesses, where the Montenegrin mountaineers held out so stubbornly against the Turk. There you see the little red cap with its black band of mourning for the Kossovo defeat and all its consequences.

“The contrast between Dalmatia and Bosnia could hardly be more complete. Bosnia, with its rugged mountains, upland pastures, and forests of oak, remained for more than 400 years under the Turks, and now that Turkey has itself changed so much and altered her aspect so completely, Bosnia itself is the best place to study the old Turkish habits before they vanish for ever. In Sarajevo, away from the main streets, the whole aspect of the town is Turkish. Here you have the veiled women, the red fez, the courtyards of the mosques, the pointed minarets peeping out of a mass of apple and cherry blossom. In Bosnia, too, is Jaice, with its old wooden Turkish houses, its lofty hill crowned by a medieval fortress, romantic waterfall, and deep gorge running for thirty miles through splendid mountain scenery.

“But to concentrate on the centre of things, the two great cities of the kingdom are Belgrade and Zagreb, which are in very healthy rivalry. For the tourist Belgrade has not much to offer, but those who are interested in men and affairs will find it throbbing with life and activity. Belgrade has greatly enlarged its bounds since 1918, the population having grown from 90,000 to nearly 350,000. It has a wonderful position—placed high on a ‘hog’s back’, jutting out to the fortress around which have been so many combats, and commanding a view far across the plains to the north and west. Here the broad Danube receives the waters of the Save, and continues its course to the Iron Gate and the Black Sea. Belgrade has great commercial possibilities, for it now serves a country four times as large as in 1912. Until 1918 the city was exposed to the shell-fire of a foreign Power; but now the town across the Danube, Zemun, has become a suburb reachable

by steamers going backwards and forwards every fifteen minutes. When once the roads are fully developed wide tracts of beautiful country will be opened up to the people. Quite different is Zagreb, situated one mile from the upper reaches of the Save. The old town is perched on the last ridges and spurs of a lovely mountain of 3,000 feet in height, while the new town is on level ground and is expanding year by year. The Cathedral and Parish Church are Gothic, and the Art Gallery and Theatre compare favourably with those of many European capitals. The University, the South Slav Academy, and other institutions are due to one very noble figure, Bishop Strossmayer, one of the spiritual forerunners of Yugoslav unity. Zagreb—more bourgeois than Belgrade, intensely Croat in sentiment—is destined to play a great part in all artistic, political, and economic development in the future.

“To return for a moment to the Yugoslav peasant: one could not speak even for these few moments of the Yugoslav Kingdom and its villages without awarding the palm to the peasant of Shumadija, that gallant and simple soul whose praises are sung by the many hundreds of British workers—both nurses and doctors—who were in Serbia during the Great War. Though not as yet overburdened with learning, the peasant of Shumadija is naturally courteous and dignified, and he has a gaiety, a courage, and power of endurance that make of him a clean and straight fighter. Practically unaided, he shook himself free from an insupportable tyranny more than a century ago. He has stood up again and again before fearful odds fighting for his democratic ideals—for the more Occidental dream of “three acres and a cow” is a reality in the Shumadija, where the peasant has the inalienable minimum of a cottage, seven acres, and, if I am not mistaken, five sheep or pigs.

“His Majesty the King! One last point, Yugoslavia has a national king in an altogether unique sense. King Alexander is of purely Serbian parents on both sides; he is the great-grandson of Karageorge, ‘the Father of Serbia’, the first heroic leader against the Turks in the final struggle for freedom a century ago, and he is the son of King Peter, who fought in the Franco-German War as a volunteer in 1870 and in the Bosnian rising of 1875. King Alexander himself during three wars has been with his troops in the field, according to the martial traditions of his House, and to-day he is the symbol of unity.”

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